Merrill's English Texts

SHORT PLAYS
OF VARIOUS TYPES

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GIFT

PREFACE

Just how a book of this sort should be treated is an individual problem for every teacher and every class; but it is suggested, as the plays are arranged alphabetically according to authors, that the class be allowed to look over the Table of Contents, and select the play of some author with whom they are familiar, or some play which by its title appeals to them. Then they may immediately take parts and begin to " walk through " the play, as a group of actors would at an early rehearsal. Perhaps, especially with younger students, it may be wiser to have a preliminary reading by the teacher or by some student who reads well; or each student might read the play outside of class.

Whatever the method adopted, any adequate high school study of the short play should, in the editor's opinion, include the following points:

1. *A study of those dramatic terms and expressions that intelligent people use when they are discussing dramatic literature.* Knowledge of these terms may not be absolutely necessary for true appreciation and enjoyment, but they make discussion easier both in and out of the classroom. The Introduction aims to help meet this need.

2. *A knowledge and understanding of the plays in this collection.* Perhaps the best way to secure this is to assign parts and use the rehearsal method, as suggested above. The lines may be read from the books, but the movements, gestures, and characterizations should be as complete as possible. The Notes and Questions are intended to help such a study.

3. *A familiarity with some of the many other short modern plays.* Older students especially may often be guided to a real liking for

play reading. Appendix A contains some suggestions in this connection.

4. *An interest in play composition.* Some good plays have been produced in high school classes; but it is the process, and not the product, that is most important. Dramatic composition of any kind is usually an interesting and valuable experience for the student. Appendix B contains some aids and exercises for this purpose.

While it has not been possible, owing to coypright difficulties, to include some of the logical plays, most of the plays included have been proved by many actual performances.

In general, the measure of success in the teaching of literature is the enjoyment of the students. To the degree that the studio idea—the give and take of real life—can be introduced, the study of the one-act play will be pleasant and profitable.

M. M. S.

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INTRODUCTION

The History of the One-Act Play

Fifteen years ago the study of one-act plays in schools would have been unbelievable, but today such a study is included in many school programs. More one-act plays have probably been written in the last ten years than in any other decade since the writing of books began. Each month sees many new books of one-act plays appearing in the bookstores. Coinciding with this new interest in the one-act play, and so closely connected with it that it is impossible to say which is the cause and which is the result, is the "Little Theater Movement."

A Little Theater is a group of people banded together to give plays. It usually includes actors, artists, authors, and people who are interested in every phase of play production. Sometimes one member of the group will write the play, others will make the scenery and costumes, and still others will learn the lines and act the play. As a rule, these people are all amateurs; that is, they do not depend on their work with the Little Theater for their living, but each one follows his

regular occupation of lawyer, doctor, carpenter, or whatever he may be.

At present there are hundreds of such groups scattered all over the United States; and more are constantly being formed. Not long ago, a lecturer at one of our universities said, "One of the greatest differences between the United States of today and the Athens of the age of Pericles is that our great national game is baseball, and the national game of the Athenians was drama." However true this statement may be, it is also true that the producing of plays is becoming more and more a "great national game" in the United States.

This recent and growing interest in play production may be the cause of the new interest in the one-act play, for the one-act play is the favorite of the Little Theater. It seems especially adapted for presentation by amateur actors, and a program of two or three one-act plays gives the members more interesting and varied problems in acting, and in the making of costumes and scenery, than most longer plays would give. At any rate, the rise of the Little Theater and the appearance of the one-act play have been simultaneous.

It is not strictly true, however, that the one-act play is a new thing. In reality, it is as old, or older than the longer play. English plays started ten centuries ago in the churches, as part of the church services; and the first plays were really one-act plays. The priests and the choir boys acted out some simple Bible story for the uneducated congregation, such as the arrival of the shepherds and the wise men at the manger for

part of the Christmas service, or the resurrection of Christ and the conversation between His followers and the Angel at the tomb at Easter. These little plays were called *miracle plays*, and they were very popular with the people.

When these first plays outgrew the church, and began to be played by outsiders, the one-act play still continued. Many of the old medieval farces and interludes are one-act plays.

The first long plays were often little more than a series of one-act plays strung together. This was still true in the time of Shakespeare, and some of his plays consist of several threads of plot, each of which might be made into a one-act play. Such is "Pyramus and Thisbe," which appears in this volume. It is the comic element of *A Midsummer Night's Dream;* and it may easily be isolated and played by itself. It is often so played in Little Theaters.

The one-act play continued to be written and played even after the longer form became dominant, and many hundreds were written by professional playwrights and played in the theaters of England and continental Europe during the 19th century. It was then the custom to produce a short play as a preliminary to a longer play. These short plays were called *curtain raisers.* Such a play is "The Falcon," by Tennyson, which was written in 1879, and played many times as a curtain raiser by two well-known English actors, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal.

So you will see that the one-act play has always

existed, ever since there have been any plays in the English language.

There is a sense, however, in which the one-act play is, as has so often been stated, the product of our own generation, almost of the last ten years. Before that time, the writing of one-act plays was rather accidental. No playwright would have thought that he could become honored or famous for that form of play alone. Critics did not consider the one-act play worthy of serious study. The one-act play was in the same position as the short story before it had been developed and made a recognized form of art by Poe, Hawthorne, and the other pioneers. Now, however, all this has changed. The Little Theater is constantly demanding more and more one-act plays. Writers of note have begun to produce them, and critics have begun to study them seriously and to frame their fundamental principles. The one-act play has arrived!

A Definition of the One-Act Play

If you know how the critics define the modern short story, you will be better able to understand what they mean by the one-act play. The short story, they say, is not merely a story told in a few paragraphs or pages. A summary of a novel, for instance, although as brief as a short story, would not be a short story. A novel, through wealth of character, breadth of background, and multiplicity of incident, gives a portrayal of life. These things are denied to the short story. The short

story attains its effect by briefly portraying a single incident. Every thought and every word must aid in giving a clear and unified impression. The same is true of the one-act play. And as the short story emphasizes primarily *character*, or *plot*, or *atmosphere*, so may the one-act play. Often one of these is prominent almost to the exclusion of the others.

We may, then, define the one-act play as a short play giving a single unified impression, usually tending to emphasize primarily character, plot, or atmosphere. It usually deals with a single incident and contains one small group of characters.

Studying the One-Act Play

In studying the one-act play, we must keep in mind the fact that all plays really exist, in the true sense, only when they are performed. The plays printed in this volume are plays only in the sense that printed words and music are a song. They are directions from which plays can be made. The plays will exist only when the words are spoken by the actors in the proper settings, just as the song exists only when it is being sung. And in the same way that you do not confine your study of music to reading the score of the composer, you should not confine your study of a play to a mere reading of the author's directions.

You cannot actually memorize and perform every play you wish to enjoy, but you can give a classroom production of many of them. Parts may be assigned,

and the students representing the various characters may read the lines and act out the play in the front of the classroom. Even though the lines are not memorized but are read from the book, if the reading is well done, the play will begin to exist. These classroom performances are often surprisingly effective.

It is hoped that you will want to become acquainted with many more plays, however, than you will have time to act out in the classroom. To do that, you must develop the theater in your mind. You must see the characters moving in your mind's eye, and hear them speaking in your mind's ear. That is probably what the author did when he wrote the play. To the extent that you can develop this inward theater you will become a good reader of plays.

You will find it very pleasant and profitable, too, to try to write a play yourself. Some books of interesting one-act plays, and some exercises in play writing, are suggested in the last few pages of this volume.

Some Technical Points about the One-Act Play

There are some general technical terms that students of the one-act play should know, in order to discuss plays with one another more easily and more intelligently.

All plays are classified as either tragedies or comedies. A play is a *tragedy* if the leading figure, or the person in whom the audience is chiefly interested, is brought to some catastrophe. In other words, the dramatic

hero of the play usually comes to ruin or death. As a rule, a tragedy is a serious play, but from the technical point of view it need not be. Sometimes the leading figure is defeated by the force of external circumstances, and sometimes by a defect in his own character. You must be sure to understand that a tragic ending need not be an unsatisfactory one from the point of view of the audience. In fact, just the reverse is true. In a good tragedy the catastrophe is entirely satisfying and logical; an illogical happy ending would spoil the effectiveness of the play. "A Night at an Inn" is technically a tragedy, but we cannot conceive of any other satisfactory ending. The situation and the characters call for the action that the play develops.

In a *comedy*, the villain is foiled and the hero succeeds. It has what is called a dénouement, or an unraveling of the plot. While comedies are usually light and amusing, this fact does not make them comedies; technically, they are comedies only because the leading character succeeds in carrying out his plans.

Every play must have an *exposition*, which is the part where the author explains the situation or tells the audience what has happened in the lives of his characters before the play begins. The more naturally this exposition can be introduced, the cleverer is the playwright. The *incentive moment* is the incident that starts the action of the play. The *climax* is the turning point in the play; and so it is usually the point of highest interest. It is the point at which the fate of the leading character is determined by some outward occurrence or

by some inward decision. In a one-act play the climax is apt to come very near the end.

In "The Brink of Silence," for example, the exposition is the conversation between Cole and Macready, in which the audience learns who Cole really is. The incentive moment is the appearance of the other two characters, Darton and Johnson. The action does not start until they enter; everything before that is merely explanation. The climax comes near the end of the play, where Cole is making up his mind whether or not to keep his secret. The entire action hinges on what he will decide; and when the decision is made, the play is over.

Of course, you must keep in mind that authors may not consciously put these technical points into their plays. But, it is the nature of plays, and most other narrative composition, to contain these parts, just as it is the nature of certain chemicals to react in certain ways. As the chemist observes the chemical reactions and evolves certain rules, so the critic observes plays and deduces certain technical rules from his observations.

One more important technical point that is useful in discussing the one-act play is the distinction between theme and plot. The *theme* is the underlying idea of the play, a general observation or principle of human nature around which the play is built. The *plot* is the specific series of incidents that occur in the play. In "The Rising of the Moon," for example, the plot is the story of how an Irish patriot, who is trying to escape

from the law, talks a sergeant into letting him go, although the sergeant had previously determined to capture him. The theme of the play might be stated in several different ways: as, "A man will often yield to strange unselfish impulses, which his reason tells him are wrong," or "Even a stern officer of the law may sometimes be talked into generosity."

You will probably get more enjoyment from your study of one-act plays if you keep these technical points in mind, and certainly your classroom discussions will be more accurate and more easily conducted. Of course, it is entirely possible to enjoy reading plays without knowing a thing about their technique, just as you may enjoy music without having any technical knowledge of it. But as the study of music, or painting, or any other art brings a higher and more intelligent appreciation of it, so technical knowledge produces a finer appreciation of the modern one-act play.

THE DARK OF THE DAWN

A Martial Interlude

BY

BEULAH MARIE DIX

THE PEOPLE

BASIL TOLLOCHO, Colonel of Horse in the Imperial service.

ANDREAS BUCQUOI, his kinsman and Captain-Lieutenant.

GERHARD, COUNT VON MANDERSPERG, in the service of Saxe-Weimar.

HUGO VON MANDERSPERG.

THE PLACE. A little village in Pomerania, which has been seized and occupied by a wing of the Emperor's vast army, which has just won a victory over the forces of Saxe-Weimar.

THE PERIOD. The latter part of the Thirty Years' War.

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THE DARK OF THE DAWN

As the fortune of war has ordained, the living room of a sober burgher dwelling has become the quarters of COLONEL BASIL TOLLOCHO. *It is a spacious, dark room, with dim wainscot, smoky plaster above, and heavy roof-beams. A heavy door leads to the village street. There are narrower doors to inner rooms; and there are two windows, the diamond panes of which are obscured with glistering white frost. The room is furnished with a great porcelain stove (stage left) in which is a roaring fire, a settle of dark oak before it, and a table near the settle. There is another table (stage right) on which are writing materials, cups and flagons, and a brace of pistols in holsters. Against the wall is a carved chest of drawers. Beneath the windows are forms. Beside the writing table is a great chair, covered with a shaggy bearskin. Here and there are several stools. There are signs, in this burgher interior, of a military occupation. Saddle-bags and a saddle are cast down upon the floor. Pieces of armor—gauntlets and back and breast pieces—rest on a form. Across the settle is hung a heavy military cloak. On both the tables are lighted candles, more than half burned out. The whole effect of the room is business-like and stern—a conqueror's quarters.*

The time is four o'clock of a bitter morning in January.

Never for a moment is it forgotten that outside is bitter cold. The fire glows in the stove. The frost on the windows gleams whitely. From time to time a SENTINEL, *in a long Cossack coat, his face reddened with cold, is seen to pass the windows, in the outer dark.*

At the table by the fire, poring upon a map which is unrolled before him, sits BASIL TOLLOCHO. *He is a man of forty, tall, lithe, dark, with close-cropped beard and mustaches, and short hair, which is slightly grayed upon the temples. He wears military dress, of somber color, but good fabric, long boots with spurs, a sword in baldric, an officer's scarf of silk. Obviously he is a commander, every inch of him, both of himself and of other men.*

After a moment the SENTINEL'S *voice is heard outside. At the sound* TOLLOCHO *lays down the map and listens.*

SENTINEL (*without*). Stand, ho!
BUCQUOI. A friend!
SENTINEL. The word, friend!
BUCQUOI. Pope and Emperor!
SENTINEL. Pass, friend!

(*There is a stamping of feet at the very threshold, and* BUCQUOI *enters the room. He is about thirty, a competent, ruthless professional soldier, lean, alert, keen-eyed. He wears the dress of a horse-captain, and over all a heavy cloak, to which clings a little rime of white snow.*

Throughout the talk that follows the SENTINEL *on his beat is seen to pass and repass the windows.*)

TOLLOCHO (*turns in his seat, alert and interested*). What news, Bucquoi?

BUCQUOI. No news, sir, yet, of him you seek—of young Von Mandersperg.

TOLLOCHO. Drink a cup against the cold.

BUCQUOI. I thank you, sir. (*Lays off his cloak, fills a cup at the table, and drinks while he talks.*)

TOLLOCHO. You followed the last clue?

BUCQUOI. The clue that led to Leslie's camp? 'Twas a wild-goose chase.

TOLLOCHO. But you spoke with this prisoner of Leslie's?

BUCQUOI. Aye, sir.

TOLLOCHO. A young man, and a gentleman, 'twas said.

BUCQUOI. True, sir, but never son to the Count von Mandersperg.

TOLLOCHO. How know you that?

BUCQUOI. This young man, Leslie's prisoner, is named Kaulbach, not Von Mandersperg, Ansel Kaulbach.

TOLLOCHO. Go to! A name is easily changed.

BUCQUOI. Moreover, he was not taken in arms against us, as runs the rumor of young Von Mandersperg.

TOLLOCHO. So! That is to the point. Tell me, then, how was Ansel Kaulbach taken?

BUCQUOI. Within our lines, masking as a sutler's boy.

TOLLOCHO. A spy, eh?

BUCQUOI. It seems so, sir—scarcely the trade for the son of Count von Mandersperg.

TOLLOCHO. Nay, 'twere a fit trade for his father's son! But young Von Mandersperg was openly in arms against us. I cannot doubt that story. So this Kaulbach is never him we seek. (BUCQUOI *takes some papers from his coat pocket.*) What have you there?

BUCQUOI. Papers in cipher, sir. Leslie took them from Kaulbach.

TOLLOCHO. Suffer me— (*Takes papers.*)

BUCQUOI. Leslie knows your skill to unravel such writings. And he would not hang his prisoner, Kaulbach, till he be assured of what is in the papers.

TOLLOCHO. The case is clear against the prisoner, is it not?

BUCQUOI. So it would seem. But Leslie is a Scot and cautious. He would give him the benefit of the doubt, until these papers be unriddled.

TOLLOCHO. I'll about it. (*Scans papers closely.*) No, 'tis not by reading crosswise. A knotted problem! So! So!

BUCQUOI. Under your favor, sir, I begin to question if the tale they brought you can be true. These two days I have scoured the camp. If young Von Mandersperg were indeed a prisoner in the hands of any of our people—

TOLLOCHO. The tale is true. The Count von Mandersperg's son is somewhere alive within our lines.

BUCQUOI. But I do not see the way—

TOLLOCHO. Nor do I see the way clearly. I do but know that Von Mandersperg's son will be delivered unto me this hour. Take horse, Andreas, and ride to

our southward line. Boguslav and his forayers have this hour straggled in from the battlefield. It may be you shall find the young man in their keeping.

BUCQUOI. I'll about it, sir.

TOLLOCHO. You have made it known throughout the host that I will give a thousand pistoles to the man that delivers young Von Mandersperg to me?

BUCQUOI. A thousand pistoles!

TOLLOCHO. Well?

BUCQUOI. 'Tis a ransom for a general, sir. And this man is but a paltry subaltern of horse.

TOLLOCHO. He is the Count von Mandersperg's one son. To me he is worth a general's ransom. Twelve hundred pistoles—fifteen hundred, if he is delivered unto me this hour. About it, kinsman! The time is short.

BUCQUOI. Short, sir?

TOLLOCHO. Count Gerhard von Mandersperg will be my guest this hour.

BUCQUOI. What! The Count himself?

TOLLOCHO. Aye, sent as commissioner to treat with us, touching the ransoming of the prisoners we made in the battle. I am deputed to receive him. And I would greet the Count with his one son standing here at my elbow—my prisoner, mine to deal with as I list. The time is short. Go seek in Boguslav's lines!

BUCQUOI. I'll ride at once, sir.

TOLLOCHO (*rising*). Stay! I shall have further need of you at dawn.

BUCQUOI. I am ready, sir.

TOLLOCHO. Choose you sufficient escort. A month's leave is yours.

BUCQUOI. I thank—

TOLLOCHO. Wait! You shall ride south, to the Turkish frontier, and you shall sell into the service of the galleys the man that I shall deliver unto you.

BUCQUOI (*not shocked, but quite honestly surprised*). The galleys!

TOLLOCHO. Well, kinsman? This scruple at the deed is new in you.

BUCQUOI. Faith, 'tis a thing of custom with me, and with most of my fellows, but you—kinsman, I never knew you put a man to pain for sheer wantonness. You act for cause, I know.

TOLLOCHO. Aye, for cause!

BUCQUOI. Then, for kinship's sake, will you not give me to know why you would thrust this young man living into hell?

TOLLOCHO (*speaking with effort*). I have no son, even as Von Mandersperg at dawn shall find himself without a son—worse than without a son! She to whom I was new wedded—(*Breaks off.*)

BUCQUOI. 'Twas Elisabeth Waldstein, of Bohemian stock.

TOLLOCHO. What further do you know?

BUCQUOI. She perished when Mansfeld's demi-devils sacked the Bohemian convent where you had placed her for her safety ere you rode to war.

TOLLOCHO. No. You are at fault there, Andreas.

BUCQUOI. What! You say that your wife escaped?

TOLLOCHO. No! I say that she died months later.

BUCQUOI. Von Mandersperg—I remember! He was a captain then in Mansfeld's band—the band that sacked the convent. And he—

TOLLOCHO. The fortune of war gave her into his keeping. The fortune of war held me a prisoner four years in a Saxon castle, till every trace of her was lost. Now the fortune of war gives Von Mandersperg's son into my hands. And by the God that is above the fortune of war, in the dark of the dawn Von Mandersperg shall say with me: I have no son!

BUCQUOI. Send it be I that bring him to you! (*Snatches up his cloak and starts from room.*)

TOLLOCHO (*courteously*). Stay— Your cloak. 'Tis perishing cold.

BUCQUOI (*halts, and muffles his cloak about him*). Faith, yes, and colder every hour.

TOLLOCHO. So? Then bid the sentry take his station in the byre where he will be sheltered.

BUCQUOI. But—

TOLLOCHO. Nay, man, 'tis for my dignity, not for use, that he is set. The camp is guarded otherwhere, and well guarded. Get you gone!

BUCQUOI. I will be here again before the dawn. And mark you, I'll not come alone!

TOLLOCHO. I trust you, kinsman.

(BUCQUOI *salutes and goes out. His squeaking footsteps are heard receding through the hard-packed snow. From this point the* SENTINEL *ceases to pass the window.*

TOLLOCHO *seats himself at the table (right) and spreads out before him the papers taken from Kaulbach.*)

Now for this young spy's cipher. H'm! A tangled code! Will this serve, perchance?

(*As* TOLLOCHO *sits poring over the papers, a white, drawn young face is seen for a moment to gaze in at the window, eyeing the fire, not* TOLLOCHO, *and speedily to disappear.*)

Ah! Faith, I have it. There's the key to the cipher, Leslie! A clever spy, this! Our lines described—our numbers—matter fit to hang a dozen men! To hand—and so 'tis I that give good-night to Ansel Kaulbach!

(*Starts to write out the translation of the papers, and then, with a quick, instinctive motion snatches up a pistol and turns to the door. Very faintly is audible a sound, as of a numbed hand's stirring the latch.*)

What's here?

(*The door is pushed inward.* HUGO VON MANDERSPERG *stumbles blinking into the light, closes the door behind him, and stands leaning against it for support. He is a lithe, dark lad of fifteen, with long-lashed gray eyes, that one feels instinctively he must have had from his mother. He is white-faced, and very nearly outworn with sleeplessness and rough handling. He wears the disheveled dress of a cornet of horse—a soiled and torn shirt, sleeveless doublet of a dull reddish hue, breeches of the same, horseman's boots. A bit of cord is bound about one wrist, and on his other wrist shows the red excoriation where the cord has pressed.* TOLLOCHO *rises and surveys him, in half contemptuous surprise.*)

My word!

HUGO. Please! If you will let me to the fire—only one minute—only one minute—

TOLLOCHO (*business-like, and with no great compassion, since he is long accustomed to sights of pity, goes to* HUGO, *and lifting his limp arm, looks down at the tell-tale bit of cord*). So! One of Saxe-Weimar's captured subalterns, are you?

HUGO. If you will let me—have but one minute—

TOLLOCHO. Whom did you break from?

HUGO. Only one minute—before you hand me over to them—only one minute—and the fire—(*Staggers.*)

TOLLOCHO (*who has never put a man to pain for sheer wantonness*). Steady! Sit down and warm you. (*Catches* HUGO'S *elbow and eases him down on the settle.*)

HUGO. I had not thought—'twould take so long to die. I wanted to die—when I found I couldn't pass the sentries. I thought I could freeze and die quickly—but it took so long—so long—and I saw the light of the fire—and then—and then—

TOLLOCHO (*meets* HUGO'S *eyes. Half against his will, and to his own surprise, he takes the cloak that hangs across the settle.*) Put that round you!

HUGO (*blankly*). Sir?

TOLLOCHO (*flinging the cloak round* HUGO). Put the cloak round you—so! You can sit here till the guard comes to fetch you. (*Goes to the table and fills a cup.*)

HUGO. The guard? It does not matter—nothing matters—if only I can be warm again!

TOLLOCHO. Here! Drink this! Drink it! All of it!

HUGO (*having drunk*). I thank you, sir. (*In the act of drinking, the cloak has slipped from him.*)

TOLLOCHO. Pull up that cloak! (*As* TOLLOCHO *reaches out his hand to adjust the cloak,* HUGO *flinches as if from a blow.*) I have no thought to strike you.

HUGO. I—I ask your pardon!

TOLLOCHO. So you've not been handled over-tenderly, these last days.

HUGO (*embarrassed and ashamed, looks down and tugs at the bit of cord upon his wrist*). Fortune of war, sir.

TOLLOCHO. Hold out your arm. (*With his knife he cuts away the cord.*) It seems they would not take your parole.

HUGO. I could not give it, sir.

TOLLOCHO. Why play the fool? You know you can't escape.

HUGO. I must! I must! It's my one chance. I gnawed the ropes, but I couldn't pass the sentries. And now it's all to begin again! It's all to begin again! Why didn't I die out yonder? Why didn't I—

TOLLOCHO. Steady! You're old enough to know the rules of this rough game. Content your captors with the ransom that they ask, and you'll be free to go your way.

HUGO. I can't pay ransom.

TOLLOCHO. Eh?

HUGO. I tell you I can't! I can't! I can't ransom myself. They tried to make me write for ransom to

my father. They said if I didn't—they'd put out my eyes. Do you hear? They'd put out my eyes!

TOLLOCHO. So, so! Well, I should counsel you, write to your father.

HUGO. I can't! I've left him—forever! I won't beg of him—not of him! Even if they kill me—however they kill me—I can't beg of my father.

TOLLOCHO. Try your other kindred, then.

HUGO. There's no one—no one, I tell you—no one in all the world! I can't ransom myself—whatever they do to me—whatever—(*Rises.*) Oh, why didn't I die? Why didn't I—(*Blindly turns toward the door.*)

TOLLOCHO (*grasping* HUGO's *arm*). Sit you down!

HUGO. Let me go! I pray you! As if I hadn't come in here! Let me go out again—into the cold! I'll have better courage this time I'll die this time. Oh, for God's sake! Let me go! Let me go! Let me go!

TOLLOCHO. (*Throughout he has been looking down into* HUGO's *eyes.*) Who are the men whose prisoner you are?

HUGO. They're going to blind me!

TOLLOCHO. Who are they?

HUGO. 'Tis a Greek captain, Corvinus, in Boguslav's command. Won't you let me have this one last chance? Won't you let me go?

TOLLOCHO. At what figure does he set your ransom?

HUGO. But I can't pay it! I can't—

TOLLOCHO. At what figure?

HUGO. One hundred pistoles. Won't you give me this one chance? It's my eyes, I tell you! My eyes!

TOLLOCHO. Perhaps your eyes are worth a hundred pistoles. You will consider yourself my prisoner, on your parole. Sit down!

(HUGO *sinks down again upon the settle.* TOLLOCHO *returns to the table and sits to write.*)

If I let you go unransomed, you will of course promise me never again to bear arms against the Emperor.

HUGO. But you don't mean you will ransom me and—and let me go—unransomed—let me go—free?

TOLLOCHO. I think it probable.

HUGO. Free? And you mean it! I—I—

TOLLOCHO. There's naught to say. Rest silent! And sleep, if you can.

HUGO. I haven't dared to sleep, sir—till this hour. (*Rests his folded arms on the table by the settle, and lays his head heavily upon them.*)

TOLLOCHO (*writing*). So, so! To Captain Corvinus: To give him to know that his prisoner, Cornet—What's your name, lad?

HUGO (*drowsily*). Hugo.

TOLLOCHO. Hugo what else?

HUGO. Hugo von Mandersperg.

TOLLOCHO. Von Mandersperg! (*After a moment.*) Did I hear you aright? Who is your father?

HUGO. Gerhard, the Count von Mandersperg. (*Falls asleep.*)

TOLLOCHO. Von Mandersperg—aye! The boy, a prisoner among Boguslav's men! His boy! His! (*Goes to* HUGO's *side.*) Let me look on you! Asleep,

eh? So! *His* son! (BUCQUOI *comes again into the room.*) You, Andreas?

BUCQUOI. Good tidings, sir! Young Von Mandersperg is—

TOLLOCHIO. Yonder is Von Mandersperg's son.

BUCQUOI. Here? How came he—

TOLLOCHO. He broke from his captors. He came to me, of all men in this vast camp. I knew that he must come. (*Sits again at table.*)

BUCQUOI. The hand of God is in it!

TOLLOCHO. God or the devil! Well! Can you ride this hour?

BUCQUOI. Southward, you mean?

TOLLOCHO. Yes, to the Turkish frontier, with Von Mandersperg's son. This hour!

BUCQUOI. This hour? But Von Mandersperg himself has not yet seen—

TOLLOCHO. He shall hear. That is enough. Come! Come! I'm wearied of this business. Mount your men and ride forthwith.

BUCQUOI. I shall, sir.

TOLLOCHO. Whilst I write out this cipher that shall hang Leslie's spy. Wait! Take—him with you—now. I have no more to say to Von Mandersperg's son. Take him from my sight. At once! (*Bends over his papers, determined to lose himself in them.*)

BUCQUOI (*goes to* HUGO *and shakes him roughly*). Come, sirrah! Waken! Up with you! Wake, I say!

HUGO (*starts up, half dazed with sleep, with a frightened cry*). Ah! Let me go! Let me go! (*As he comes to*

himself, he sees TOLLOCHO *and crosses swiftly to his side.*) Thank God! Thank God! I thought that I had dreamed you! I thought that—(*In the silence he hears his own shaken voice, and at the sound controls himself.*) I—I ask your pardon. I was half asleep. I'm sorry, sir.

BUCQUOI. Enough of talking! Come, Von Mandersperg!

TOLLOCHO (*with his eyes fixed upon his writing, determined not to look at* HUGO). You are to go with Captain Bucquoi.

HUGO. You're sending me back this hour to mine own camp? Faith, sir, you're better than your word!

BUCQUOI. Aye, he keeps his word. March out!

TOLLOCHO (*writing*). Go!

HUGO. But won't you let me—since you wouldn't let me say, "I thank you," ere I slept—won't you—

(*He holds out his hand, standing quietly, with his intent eyes on* TOLLOCHO. *There is a moment's silence.* TOLLOCHO'S *pen wavers, but he still writes on, without glancing at the boy.*)

BUCQUOI. Come!

(BUCQUOI *lays a hand on* HUGO'S *shoulder. Obediently* HUGO *goes with him toward the door, but he keeps his eyes still upon* TOLLOCHO. *When he has almost reached the threshold* TOLLOCHO, *unable to bear more, dashes down his pen and rises.*)

TOLLOCHO. Wait! (*With a quick stride he goes to* HUGO *and almost fiercely snatches him out of* BUCQUOI'S *hold.*) You will not ride southward, Andreas.

BUCQUOI. You alter your purpose?

TOLLOCHO. Yes.

BUCQUOI. You remember what befell, sixteen years ago?

TOLLOCHO. Is he to blame for what befell sixteen years ago?

HUGO. You mean, sir—

TOLLOCHO. I mean—you shall go free, as I promised.

HUGO. I—

TOLLOCHO. You have no call to thank me. Go in yonder. Have your sleep out in safety. Go!

HUGO. As you bid, sir. (*Bewildered, he goes obediently into an inner room.*)

BUCQUOI. But 'tis Von Mandersperg's son!

TOLLOCHO. What voice had he in the choosing of his father? (*Takes papers and money from the table.*) This letter and this money to Corvinus. I ransom young Von Mandersperg of him.

BUCQUOI. Aye, sir.

TOLLOCHO. And this to Leslie.

BUCQUOI. The translation of the cipher papers that were taken from Kaulbach?

TOLLOCHO. Aye. The death warrant of the spy, Ansel Kaulbach, condemned by those same papers. About it!

BUCQUOI. Aye, with speed, sir. (*As* BUCQUOI *turns to the door, there is heard without the creak of horse-hoofs in the snow. He glances out at the window.*) In good time! Colonel, 'twill be the Count von Mandersperg is dismounting at your door.

TOLLOCHO. Gerhard von Mandersperg!

BUCQUOI. And you will give him back his only son?

TOLLOCHO. I do not see my way clear, but this I see clear. I must keep the word that I pledged to that lad—my word to that lad!

(VON MANDERSPERG *comes into the room. He is a man of* TOLLOCHO'S *own age, but stockier, fairer, of a more northern type. A powerful, cold man. He is fully armed, richly dressed in military fashion, and wrapped in a heavy, furred cloak.*)

VON MANDERSPERG. I speak to Colonel Tollocho?

TOLLOCHO. He is your servant, Count von Mandersperg. About your mission, Captain. (BUCQUOI *salutes and goes out.*) Will you sit, Count?

VON MANDERSPERG. 'Tis a cursedly cold morning. (*Sits by fire.*)

TOLLOCHO (*pouring*). A cup of wine?

VON MANDERSPERG (*taking the proffered cup*). My thanks! You'll drink with me?

TOLLOCHO. Hardly.

VON MANDERSPERG. Eh?

TOLLOCHO. The Emperor may choose the man for whom I pour. I choose for myself the man with whom I drink. (*Sits at table.*)

VON MANDERSPERG. By that I'd know you, if by nothing else. You are Basil Tollocho.

TOLLOCHO. And my wife was Elisabeth Waldstein.

VON MANDERSPERG. So! 'Tis ten years since we last encountered, Colonel.

TOLLOCHO. You came then under a flag of truce, even as now.

VON MANDERSPERG. And you spoke some words which you have not yet made good.

TOLLOCHO. The game is not played out, however, Count. You have a son, I believe?

VON MANDERSPERG (*quickly, startled*). My son? What of my son?

TOLLOCHO. He served in the army of Saxe-Weimar, which we routed three days agone—served as cornet of horse, and—

VON MANDERSPERG (*steady and reassured*). As cornet of horse? My son? Ah, I see. Yes. What then?

TOLLOCHO. And he is now a prisoner.

VON MANDERSPERG. A prisoner in your hands, this son of mine?

TOLLOCHO. You judge me rightly.

VON MANDERSPERG. And you think to refuse my proffers of ransom? You think to torture me by torturing this boy? You think—

TOLLOCHO. I think I should waste words to talk with you, under a flag of truce. As for this boy of yours, I shall do by him even as I promised.

VON MANDERSPERG. 'Twas so I read you.

TOLLOCHO. As I promised. No, you would not understand.

VON MANDERSPERG. Well enough I understand that this is a different ending than you purposed to your tragedy.

TOLLOCHO. God knows, a different ending!

VON MANDERSPERG. I have small skill, it seems, to play the part you had assigned to me. You have this son of mine? Good! Come! What next The strapado for him? The rack. You see, I sit unmoved. My word, Tollocho, you should have better shaped your tragedy!

(BUCQUOI *enters, in hot excitement.*)

BUCQUOI. Colonel! Colonel Tollocho! Here's luck—luck of the devil's own! A curse on Leslie! The lad is dead!

VON MANDERSPERG. Excellent well devised!

TOLLOCHO. The lad? What do you mean?

BUCQUOI. Aye, the lad you sought—young Von Mandersperg!

TOLLOCHO. Von Mandersperg!

VON MANDERSPERG. My cue for frenzy?

BUCQUOI. Leslie's prisoner—'twas young Von Mandersperg indeed—and Leslie hanged him.

VON MANDERSPERG (*with satisfaction*). Hanged? A dog's death!

TOLLOCHO. Leslie's prisoner? But he was—

BUCQUOI. At the last gasp he did confess himself Von Mandersperg. He hoped to save his neck thereby, but when Leslie saw the writing that you sent—

VON MANDERSPERG (*rising eagerly*). What! A writing that you—that *you* had sent, Tollocho?

BUCQUOI. Leslie hanged him out of hand. The devil's luck! A swift death that snatched him from us—and through you yourself—through you!

VON MANDERSPERG. So! He is dead, this son of

mine, through you. Tollocho—you! You've given him a dog's death, this son of mine, for my sake! You pine for tragedy, and I'll not play it? Play it yourself, man!

TOLLOCHO. What do you aim at?

VON MANDERSPERG. This boy—this son of mine you slew for my sake—who was this boy? Tell me! Whose son was he? Who was his mother?

TOLLOCHO. His mother? Why do you ask me?

VON MANDERSPERG. Because his mother was Elisabeth Waldstein.

TOLLOCHO. Elisabeth! Her child!

VON MANDERSPERG. Yes, and his father—His father was the husband of Elisabeth Waldstein.

TOLLOCHO (*rising*). What do you say? Elisabeth—my wife—

VON MANDERSPERG. Your wife—and your own son!

TOLLOCHO. My son! She bore my son—and I—and I— (*Reels where he stands.*)

VON MANDERSPERG. Yes, yours, Tollocho, yours! I planned to strike you through him—you that she loved—I planned to strike you—

TOLLOCHO. My son that I have slain! (*Sinks on a chair by the table.*)

VON MANDERSPERG. He balked my plans, the young whelp! He ran from me, but faith of man! I could not have shaped it better than it has fallen. Your son—your own—and you have given him a dog's death, as mine—*your* only son!

TOLLOCHO. Elisabeth! Our son!

BUCQUOI (*thrusting in between the two men*). Aye, Count, but we hold this other living in our hands.

VON MANDERSPERG (*contemptuously*). What other?

BUCQUOI. You have yourself a son, I believe.

VON MANDERSPERG. Aye, and a lad too clever to stumble into your clutches! Not like this young thick-head Tollocho you have hanged.

BUCQUOI. Are you so sure? For all his cleverness we have him prisoner, this young Von Mandersperg.

VON MANDERSPERG. Von Mandersperg? You fool! My lad does not bear his own name when he goes upon a mission.

BUCQUOI. Not his own name? But sure, this is your son! A young cornet of horse—

VON MANDERSPERG. Seek you another prisoner, friend, ere you strive to fright me! My son is no hot-head young subaltern—no horseboy like this brat of yours, Tollocho—this Hugo that you've hanged.

TOLLOCHO (*starting up*). Hugo! Father of mercy! You said—Hugo?

VON MANDERSPERG. You have your tragedy! Enjoy it, man!

TOLLOCHO. Hugo! The boy—with her own eyes that looked upon me! Hers! And I would have sent him—I would have sent him—My son! My son!

VON MANDERSPERG. Aye, your own! Your own!

TOLLOCHO. Pitiful God! I held my hand in time! (*Goes to the door to the inner room.*) Hugo! Hugo! Dear God! If I had let him—Hugo!

VON MANDERSPERG. Hugo! What madness—(*Sleepily and a little dazed,* HUGO *comes into the room.*)

HUGO. You called me, sir?

TOLLOCHO (*his hands on* HUGO'S *shoulders*). Look on me! Aye, her son! My son I almost had sent living into hell! (*Draws the boy to him.*)

VON MANDERSPERG (*speaking with difficulty, like one whose throat is shriveled and dry*). Then—who is he that Leslie hanged this hour?

BUCQUOI (*evilly exultant as was* VON MANDERSPERG *a moment before*). A clever lad who bore the name—

VON MANDERSPERG. You devil! Speak!

BUCQUOI. The name of Ansel Kaulbach.

VON MANDERSPERG (*sits in chair by the table, where the papers still are outspread*). You see—you do not fright me. I laugh! I!—What paper's this? What hand? (*Snatches up a paper from the table.*) God!

BUCQUOI. His papers—Kaulbach's papers. You know the hand? You know the hand?

VON MANDERSPERG. My boy!

BUCQUOI. If you still doubt, come out with me! The ground is frozen hard. His grave is not yet dug. Come out and see his face—the face of this hanged spy!

TOLLOCHO. Peace! The man has lost his only son.

VON MANDERSPERG. Your pity? Hell's last jest! You pity me!

TOLLOCHO (*to* HUGO). Take you that cloak and come with me.

(HUGO *wraps the cloak about him.*)

BUCQUOI. Whither, kinsman?

TOLLOCHO. To offer thanks—thanks that my Elisabeth was strong this hour to save our son! (TOLLOCHO *pushes open the door. It is seen that the dawn is just breaking. In the east is a faint red glow, and a rosy light shines on the snowy roofs of the village. He turns to* HUGO.) Come—my son! It is dawn. We can see our way.

(TOLLOCHO *passes out with his arm about* HUGO'S *shoulders.* BUCQUOI *in the doorway watches them go into the dawn. At the table, under the pallid candlelight,* VON MANDERSPERG *sits crouching, with his head upon his arms.*)

CURTAIN

THE MAKER OF DREAMS

A Fantasy in One Act

BY

OLIPHANT DOWN

CHARACTERS

PIERROT.
PIERRETTE.
THE MANUFACTURER.

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THE MAKER OF DREAMS

Evening. A room in an old cottage, with walls of dark oak, lit only by the moonlight that peers through the long, low casement-window at the back, and the glow from the fire that is burning merrily on the spectator's left. A cobbled street can be seen outside, and a door to the right of the window opens directly on to it. Opposite the fire is a kitchen dresser with cups and plates twinkling in the firelight. A high-backed oak settle, as though afraid of the cold moonlight, has turned its back on the window and warms its old timbers at the fire. In the middle of the room stands a table with a red cover; there are chairs on either side of it. On the hob, a kettle is keeping itself warm; whilst overhead, on the hood of the chimney-piece, a small lamp is turned very low.

A figure flits past the window and, with a click of the latch, PIERRETTE *enters. She hangs up her cloak by the door, gives a little shiver and runs to warm herself for a moment. Then, having turned up the lamp, she places the kettle on the fire. Crossing the room, she takes a tablecloth from the dresser and proceeds to lay tea, setting out crockery for two. Once she goes to the window and drawing aside the common red casement-curtains, looks out, but returns to her work, disappointed. She puts a spoonful of tea into the teapot, and another, and a third.*

Something outside attracts her attention; she listens, her face brightening. A voice is heard singing.

"Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She is caught in a tangle of boughs;
And mellow and musical June
Is saying 'Good night' to the cows."

(*The voice draws nearer and a conical white hat goes past the window.* PIERROT *enters.*)

PIERROT (*throwing his hat to* PIERRETTE). Ugh! How cold it is. My feet are like ice.

PIERRETTE. Here are your slippers. I put them down to warm. (*She kneels beside him, as he sits before the fire and commences to slip off his shoes.*)

PIERROT (*singing*).

"Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She will put out her tongue and grimace;
And mellow and musical June
Is pinning the stars in their place."

Isn't tea ready yet?

PIERRETTE. Nearly. Only waiting for the kettle to boil.

PIERROT. How cold it was in the market-place today! I don't believe I sang at all well. I can't sing in the cold.

PIERRETTE. Ah, you're like the kettle. He can't sing when he's cold either. Hurry up, Mr. Kettle, if you please.

PIERROT. I wish it were in love with the sound of its own voice.

PIERRETTE. I believe it is. Now it's singing like a

bird. We'll make the tea with the nightingale's tongue. (*She pours the boiling water into the teapot.*) Come along.

PIERROT (*looking into the fire*). I wonder. She had beauty, she had form, but had she soul?

PIERRETTE (*cutting bread and butter at the table*). Come and be cheerful, instead of grumbling there to the fire.

PIERROT. I was thinking.

PIERRETTE. Come and have tea. When you sit by the fire, thoughts only fly up the chimney.

PIERROT. The whole world's a chimney-piece. Give people a thing as worthless as paper, and it catches fire in them and makes a stir; but real thought, they let it go up with the smoke.

PIERRETTE. Cheer up, Pierrot. See how thick I've spread the butter.

PIERROT. You're always cheerful.

PIERRETTE. I try to be happy.

PIERROT. Ugh! (*He has moved to the table. There is a short silence, during which* PIERROT *sips his tea moodily.*)

PIERRETTE. Tea all right?

PIERROT. Middling.

PIERRETTE. Only middling! I'll pour you out some fresh.

PIERROT. Oh, it's all right! How you do worry a fellow!

PIERRETTE. Heigho-ho! Shall I chain up that big black dog?

PIERROT. I say, did you see that girl today?

PIERRETTE. Whereabouts?

PIERROT. Standing by the horse-trough. With a fine air, and a string of great beads.

PIERRETTE. I didn't see her.

PIERROT. I did, though. And she saw me. Watched me all the time I was singing, and clapped her hands like anything each time. I wonder if it is possible for a woman to have a soul as well as such beautiful coloring.

PIERRETTE. She was made up!

PIERROT. I'm sure she was not. And how do you know? You didn't see her.

PIERRETTE. Perhaps I *did* see her.

PIERROT. Now, look here, Pierrette, it's no good your being jealous. When you and I took on this show business, we arranged to be just partners and nothing more. If I see anyone I want to marry, I shall marry 'em. And if you see anyone who wants to marry you, *you* can marry 'em.

PIERRETTE. I'm not jealous! It's absurd!

PIERROT (*singing abstractedly*).

> "Baby, don't wait for the moon,
> She has scratched her white chin on the gorse;
> And mellow and musical June
> Is bringing the cuckoo remorse."

PIERRETTE. Did you see that girl after the show?

PIERROT. No. She had slipped away in the crowd. Here, I've had enough tea. I shall go out and try to find her.

PIERRETTE. Why don't you stay in by the fire? You could help me to darn the socks.

PIERROT. Don't try to chaff me. Darning, indeed! I hope life has got something better in it than darning.

PIERRETTE. I doubt it. It's pretty much the same all the world over. First we wear holes in our socks, and then we mend them. The wise ones are those who make the best of it, and darn as well as they can.

PIERROT. I say, that gives me an idea for a song.

PIERRETTE. Out with it, then.

PIERROT. Well, I haven't exactly formed it yet. This is what flashed through my mind as you spoke. (*He runs up on to the table, using it as a stage.*)

"Life's a ball of worsted,
Unwind it if you can,
You who oft have boasted

(*He pauses for a moment, then hurriedly, in order to gloss over the false accenting.*)

That you are a man."

Of course that's only a rough idea.

PIERRETTE. Are you going to sing it at the show?

PIERROT (*jumping down from the table*). You're always so lukewarm. A man of artistic ideas is as sensitively skinned as a baby.

PIERRETTE. Do stay in, Pierrot. It's so cold outside.

PIERROT. You want me to listen to you grumbling, I suppose.

PIERRETTE. Just now you said I was always cheerful.

PIERROT. There you are; girding at me again.

PIERRETTE. I'm sorry, Pierrot. But the marketplace is dreadfully wet, and your shoes are awfully thin.

PIERROT. I tell you I will not stop in. I'm going out to find that girl. How do I know she isn't the very woman of my dreams?

PIERRETTE. Why are you always trying to picture an ideal woman?

PIERROT. Don't you *ever* picture an ideal man?

PIERRETTE. No, I try to be practical.

PIERROT. Women are so unimaginative! They are such pathetic, motherly things, and when they feel extra motherly they say, "I'm in love." All that is so sordid and petty. I want a woman I can set on a pedestal, and just look up at her and love her.

PIERRETTE (*speaking very fervently*).

> "Pierrot, don't wait for the moon,
> There's a heart-chilling cold in her rays;
> And mellow and musical June
> Will only last thirty short days."

PIERROT. Oh, I should never make you understand! Well, I'm off.

(*As he goes out, he sings, sidelong, over his shoulder in a mocking tone,* "Baby, don't wait for the moon." PIERRETTE *listens for a moment to his voice dying away in the distance. Then she moves to the fireplace, and begins to stir the fire. As she kneels there, the words of an old recitation form on her lips. Half unconsciously she recites*

it again to an audience of laughing flames and glowing, thoughtful coals.)

"There lives a maid in the big, wide world,
By the crowded town and mart,
And people sigh as they pass her by;
They call her Hungry Heart.

"For there trembles that on her red rose lip
That never her tongue can say,
And her eyes are sad, and she is not glad
In the beautiful calm of day.

"Deep down in the waters of pure, clear thought,
The mate of her fancy lies;
Sleeping, the night is made fair by his light
Sweet kiss on her dreaming eyes.

"Though a man was made in the wells of time
Who could set her soul on fire,
Her life unwinds, and she never finds
This love of her heart's desire.

"If you meet this maid of a hopeless love,
Play not a meddler's part.
Silence were best; let her keep in her breast
The dream of her hungry heart."

(*Overcome by tears, she hides her face in her hands. A slow, treble knock comes on the door;* PIERRETTE *looks up wonderingly. Again the knock sounds.*)

PIERRETTE. Come in.

(*The door swings slowly open, as though of its own accord, and without, on the threshold, is seen* THE MAN-

UFACTURER, *standing full in the moonlight. He is a curious, though kindly-looking, old man, and yet, with all his years, he does not appear to be the least infirm. He is the sort of person that children take to instinctively. He wears a quaintly cut, bottle-green coat, with silver buttons and large side-pockets, which almost hide his knee-breeches. His shoes have large buckles and red heels. He is exceedingly unlike a prosperous manufacturer, and, but for the absence of a violin, would be mistaken for a village fiddler. Without a word he advances into the room, and, again of its own accord, the door closes noiselessly behind him.*)

PIERRETTE (*jumping up and moving towards him*). Oh, I'm so sorry. I ought to have opened the door when you knocked.

MANUFACTURER. That's all right. I'm used to opening doors. And yours opens much more easily than some I come across. Would you believe it, some people positively nail their doors up, and it's no good knocking. But there, you're wondering who I am.

PIERRETTE. I was wondering if you were hungry.

MANUFACTURER. Ah, a woman's instinct. But, thank you, no. I am a small eater; I might say a very small eater. A smile or a squeeze of the hand keeps me going admirably.

PIERRETTE. At least you'll sit down and make yourself at home.

MANUFACTURER (*moving to the settle*). Well, I have a habit of making myself at home everywhere. In fact, most people think you can't make a *home* without *me*.

May I put my feet on the fender? It's an old habit of mine. I always do it.

PIERRETTE. They say round here:

"Without feet on the fender
Love is but slender."

MANUFACTURER. Quite right. It is the whole secret of the domestic fireside. Pierrette, you have been crying.

PIERRETTE. I believe I have.

MANUFACTURER. Bless you, I know all about it. It's Pierrot. And so you're in love with him, and he doesn't care a little bit about you, eh? What a strange old world it is! And you cry your eyes out over him.

PIERRETTE. Oh, no, I don't often cry. But to-night he seemed more grumpy than usual, and I tried so hard to cheer him up.

MANUFACTURER. Grumpy, is he?

PIERRETTE. He doesn't mean it, though. It's the cold weather, and the show hasn't been paying so well lately. Pierrot wants to write an article about us for the local paper by way of an advertisement. He thinks the editor may print it if he gives him free passes for his family.

MANUFACTURER. Do you think Pierrot is worth your tears?

PIERRETTE. Oh, yes!

MANUFACTURER. You know, tears are not to be wasted. We only have a certain amount of them

given to us just for keeping the heart moist. And when we've used them all up and haven't any more, the heart dries up, too.

PIERRETTE. Pierrot is a splendid fellow. You don't know him as well as I do. It's true he's always discontented, but it's only because he's not in love with anyone. You know, love does make a tremendous difference in a man.

MANUFACTURER. That's true enough. And has it made a difference in you?

PIERRETTE. Oh, yes! I put Pierrot's slippers down to warm, and I make tea for him, and all the time I'm happy because I'm doing something for him. If I weren't in love, I should find it a drudgery.

MANUFACTURER. You've got it right enough. But why is it that Pierrot can wake up all this poetry in you?

PIERRETTE. Because—oh, because he's just Pierrot.

MANUFACTURER. "Because he's just Pierrot." The same old reason.

PIERRETTE. Of course, he is a bit dreamy. But that's his soul. I am sure he could do great things if he tried. And have you noticed his smile? Isn't it lovely! Sometimes, when he's not looking, I want ever so much to try it on, just to see how I should look in it. (*Pensively.*) But I wish he'd smile at me a little more often, instead of at others.

MANUFACTURER. Ho! So he smiles at others, does he?

PIERRETTE. Hardly a day goes by but there's some

fine lady at the show. There was one there today, a tall girl with red cheeks. He is gone to look for her now. And it is not their faults. The poor things can't help being in love with him. (*Proudly.*) I believe everyone is in love with Pierrot.

MANUFACTURER. But supposing one of these fine ladies were to marry him?

PIERRETTE. Oh, they'd never do that. A fine lady would never marry a poor singer. If Pierrot were to get married, I think I should just . . . fade away . . . Oh, but I don't know why I talk to you like this. I feel as if I had known you for a long, long time.

(THE MANUFACTURER *rises from the settle and moves across to* PIERRETTE, *who is now folding up the white tablecloth.*)

MANUFACTURER (*very slowly*). Perhaps you have known me for a long, long time.

(*His tone is so kindly and impressive that* PIERRETTE *forgets the tablecloth and looks up at him. For a moment or two he smiles back at her as she gazes, spellbound; then he turns away to the fire again, with the little chuckle that is never far from his lips.*)

PIERRETTE (*taking a small bow from his side pocket*). Oh, look at this.

MANUFACTURER (*in mock alarm*). Oh, oh, I didn't mean you to see that. I'd forgotten it was sticking out of my pocket. I used to do a lot of archery at one time. I don't get much chance now. (*He takes it and puts it back in his pocket.*)

PIERROT (*singing in the distance*).

"Baby, don't wait for the moon,
She is drawing the sea in her net;
And mellow and musical June
Is teaching the rose to forget."

MANUFACTURER (*in a whisper as the voice draws nearer*). Who is that?

PIERRETTE. Pierrot.

(*Again the conical white hat flashes past the window and* PIERROT *enters.*)

PIERROT. I can't find her anywhere. (*Seeing* THE MANUFACTURER.) Hullo! Who are you?

MANUFACTURER. I am a stranger to you, but Pierrette knew me in a moment.

PIERROT. An old flame perhaps?

MANUFACTURER. True, I am an old flame. I've lighted up the world for a considerable time. Yet when you say "old," there are many people who think I'm wonderfully well preserved for my age. How long do you think I've been trotting about?

PIERROT (*testily, measuring a length with his hands*). Oh, about that long.

MANUFACTURER. I suppose being funny all day *does* get on your nerves.

PIERRETTE. Pierrot, you needn't be rude.

MANUFACTURER (*anxious to be alone with* PIERROT). Pierrette, have you got supper in?

PIERRETTE. Oh, I must fly! The shops will all be shut. Will you be here when I come back?

MANUFACTURER (*bustling her out*). I can't promise, but I'll try, I'll try.

(PIERRETTE *goes out. There is a silence, during which* THE MANUFACTURER *regards* PIERROT *with amusement.*)

MANUFACTURER. Well, friend Pierrot, so business is not very brisk.

PIERROT. Brisk! If laughter meant business, it would be brisk enough, but there's no money. However, I've done one good piece of work today. I've arranged with the editor to put an article in the paper. That will fetch 'em. (*Singing.*)

"Please come one day, and see our house that's down among the trees,
But do not come at four o'clock for then we count the bees,
And bathe the tadpoles and the frogs, who splash the clouds with gold,
And watch the new-cut cucumbers perspiring with the cold."

That's a song I'm writing.

MANUFACTURER. Pierrot, if you had all the money in the world, you wouldn't be happy.

PIERROT. Wouldn't I? Give me all the money in the world and I'll risk it. To start with, I'd build schools to educate the people up to high-class things.

MANUFACTURER. You dream of fame and wealth and empty ideals, and you miss all the best things there are. You are discontented. Why? Because you don't know how to be happy.

PIERROT (*reciting*).

"Life's a running brooklet,
Catch the fishes there,
You who wrote a booklet
On a woman's hair."

(*Explaining.*) That's another song I'm writing. It's the second verse. Things come to me all of a sudden like that. I must run out a third verse, just to wind it up.

MANUFACTURER. Why don't you write a song without any end, one that goes on forever?

PIERROT. I say, that's rather silly, isn't it?

MANUFACTURER. It all depends. For a song of that sort the singer must be always happy.

PIERROT. That wants a bit of doing in my line.

MANUFACTURER. Shall you and I transact a little business?

PIERROT. By all means. What seats would you like? There are the front rows covered in velvet, one shilling; wooden benches behind, sixpence; and, right at the back, the twopenny part. But, of course, you'll have shilling ones. How many shall we say?

MANUFACTURER. You don't know who I am.

PIERROT. That makes no difference. All are welcome, and we thank you for your courteous attention.

MANUFACTURER. Pierrot, I am a maker of dreams.

PIERROT. A what?

MANUFACTURER. I make all the dreams that float about this musty world.

PIERROT. I say, you'd better have a rest for a bit. I expect you're a trifle done up.

MANUFACTURER. Pierrot, Pierrot, your superior mind can't tumble to my calling. A child or one of the "people" would in a moment. I am a maker of dreams, little things that glide about into people's hearts and make them glad. Haven't you often won-

dered where the swallows go to in the autumn? They come to my workshop, and tell me who wants a dream, and what happened to the dreams they took with them in the spring.

PIERROT. Oh, I say, you can't expect me to believe that.

MANUFACTURER. When flowers fade, have you never wondered where their colors go to, or what becomes of all the butterflies in the winter? There isn't much winter about my workshop.

PIERROT. I had never thought of it before.

MANUFACTURER. It's a kind of lost property office, where every beautiful thing that the world has neglected finds its way. And there I make my celebrated dream, the dream that is called "love."

PIERROT. Ho! ho! Now we're talking.

MANUFACTURER. You don't believe in it?

PIERROT. Yes, in a way. But it doesn't last. It doesn't last. If there is form, there isn't soul, and, if there is soul, there isn't form. Oh, I've tried hard enough to believe it, but, after the first wash, the colors run.

MANUFACTURER. You got hold of a substitute. Wait until you see the genuine article.

PIERROT. But how is one to tell it?

MANUFACTURER. There are heaps of signs. As soon as you get the real thing, your shoulder-blades begin to tingle. That's love's wings sprouting. And, next, you want to soar up among the stars and sit on the roof of heaven and sing to the moon. Of course, that's be-

cause I put such a lot of the moon into my dreams. I break bits off until it's nearly all gone, and then I let it grow big again. It grows very quickly, as I dare say you've noticed. After a fortnight it is ready for use once more.

PIERROT. This is most awfully fascinating. And do the swallows bring all the dreams?

MANUFACTURER. Not always; I have other messengers. Every night when the big clock strikes twelve, a day slips down from the calendar, and runs away to my workshop in the Land of Long Ago. I give him a touch of scarlet and a gleam of gold, and say, "Go back, little Yesterday, and be a memory in the world." But my best dreams I keep for today. I buy babies, and fit them up with a dream, and then send them complete and carriage paid.

PIERROT. I've been dreaming all my life, but they've always been dreams I made myself. I suppose I don't mix 'em properly.

MANUFACTURER. You leave out the very essence of them. You must put in a little sorrow, just to take away the over-sweetness. I found that out very soon, so I took a little of the fresh dew that made pearls in the early morning, and I sprinkled my dreams with the gift of tears.

PIERROT (*ecstatically*). The gift of tears! How beautiful! You know, I should rather like to try a real one. Not one of my own making.

MANUFACTURER. Well, there are plenty about, if you only look for them.

PIERROT. That is all very well, but who's going to look about for stray dreams?

MANUFACTURER. I once made a dream that would just suit you. I slipped it inside a baby. That was twenty years ago, and the baby is now a full-grown woman, with great blue eyes and fair hair.

PIERROT. It's a lot of use merely telling me about her.

MANUFACTURER. I'll do more. When I shipped her to the world, I kept the bill of lading. Here it is. You shall have it.

PIERROT. Thanks, but what's the good of it?

MANUFACTURER. Why, the holder of that is able to claim the goods; you will notice it contains a complete description, too. I promise you, you're in luck.

PIERROT. Has she red cheeks and a string of great beads?

MANUFACTURER. No.

PIERROT. Ah, then it is not she. Where shall I find her?

MANUFACTURER. That's for you to discover. All you have to do is to search.

PIERROT. I'll start at once. (*He moves as if to go.*)

MANUFACTURER. I shouldn't start out tonight.

PIERROT. But I want to find her soon. Somebody else may find her before me.

MANUFACTURER. Pierrot, there was once a man who wanted to gather mushrooms.

PIERROT (*annoyed at the commonplace*). Mushrooms!

MANUFACTURER. Fearing people would be up

before him, he started out overnight. Morning came, and he found none, so he returned disconsolate to his house. As he came through the garden, he found a great mushroom had grown up in the night by his very doorstep. Take the advice of one who knows, and wait a bit.

PIERROT. If that's your advice—But tell me this, do you think I shall find her?

MANUFACTURER. I can't say for certain. Would you consider yourself a fool?

PIERROT. Ah—of course—when you ask me a direct thing like that, you make it—er—rather awkward for me. But, if I may say so, as man to ma—I mean as man to— (*He hesitates.*)

MANUFACTURER (*waiving the point*). Yes, yes.

PIERROT. Well, I flatter myself that . . .

MANUFACTURER. Exactly. And that's your principal danger. Whilst you are striding along gazing at the stars, you may be treading on a little glow-worm. Shall I give you a third verse for your song?

"Life's a woman calling,
Do not stop your ears,
Lest, when night is falling,
Darkness brings you tears."

(THE MANUFACTURER'S *kindly and impressive tone holds* PIERROT *as it had held* PIERRETTE *some moments before. Whilst the two are looking at each other, a little red cloak dances past the window, and* PIERRETTE *enters with her marketing.*)

PIERRETTE. Oh, I'm so glad you're still here.

MANUFACTURER. But I must be going now. I am a great traveler.

PIERRETTE (*standing against the door, so that he cannot pass*). Oh, you mustn't go yet.

MANUFACTURER. Don't make me fly out of the window. I only do that under very unpleasant circumstances.

PIERROT (*gaily, with mock eloquence*). Pierrette, regard our visitor. You little knew whom you were entertaining. You see before you the maker of the dreams that slip about the world like little fish among the rushes of a stream. He has given me the bill of lading of his great masterpiece, and it only remains for me to find her. (*Dropping to the commonplace.*) I wish I knew where to look.

MANUFACTURER. Before I go, I will give you this little rhyme:

"Let every woman keep a school,
For every man is born a fool."

(*He bows, and goes out quickly and silently.*)

PIERRETTE (*running to the door, and looking out*). Why, how quickly he has gone! He's out of sight.

PIERROT. At last I am about to attain my great ideal. There will be a grand wedding, and I shall wear my white coat with the silver braid, and carry a tall gold-topped stick. (*Singing.*)

"If we play any longer, I fear you will get
Such a cold in the head, for the grass is so wet.
But during the night, Margareta divine,
I will hang the wet grass up to dry on the line."

Pierrette, I feel that I am about to enter into a man's inheritance, a woman's love.

PIERRETTE. I wish you every happiness.

PIERROT (*singing teasingly*).

> "We shall meet in our dreams, that's a thing understood;
> You dream of the river, I'll dream of the wood.
> I am visiting you, if the river it be;
> If we meet in the wood, you are visiting me."

PIERRETTE. We must make lots of money, so that you can give her all she wants. I'll dance and dance until I fall, and the people will exclaim, "Why, she has danced herself to death."

PIERROT. You're right. We must pull the show together. I'll do that article for the paper at once. (*He takes paper, ink, etc., from the dresser, and, seating himself at the table, commences to write.*) "There has lately come to this town a company of strolling players, who give a show that is at once musical and droll. The audience is enthralled by Pierrot's magnificent singing and dancing, and . . . er . . . very much entertained by Pierrette's homely dancing. Pierrette is a charming comedienne of twenty, with . . ." what color hair?

PIERRETTE. Fair, quite fair.

PIERROT. Funny how one can see a person every day and not know the color of their hair. "Fair hair and—" eyes?

PIERRETTE. Blue, Pierrot.

PIERROT. "Fair hair and blue eyes." Fair! Blue! Oh, of course it's nonsense, though.

PIERRETTE. What's nonsense?

PIERROT. Something I was thinking. Most girls have fair hair and blue eyes.

PIERRETTE. Yes, Pierrot, we can't all be ideals.

PIERROT. How musical your voice sounds! I can't make it out. Oh, but, of course, it *is* all nonsense! (*He takes the bill of lading from his pocket and reads it.*)

PIERRETTE. What's nonsense?—Pierrot, won't you tell me?

PIERROT. Pierrette, stand in the light.

PIERRETTE. Is anything the matter?

PIERROT. I almost believe that nothing matters. (*Reading and glancing at her.*) "Eyes that say 'I love you'; arms that say 'I want you'; lips that say 'Why don't you?'" Pierrette, is it possible! I've never noticed before how beautiful you are. You don't seem a bit the same. I believe you have lost your real face, and have carved another out of a rose.

PIERRETTE. Oh, Pierrot, what is it?

PIERROT. Love! I've found it at last. Don't you understand it all?

> "I am a fool
> Who has learned wisdom in your school."

To think that I've seen you every day, and never dreamed—dreamed! Yes, ah yes, it's one of his beautiful dreams. That is why my heart seems full of the early morning.

PIERRETTE. Ah, Pierrot!

PIERROT. Oh, how my shoulders tingle! I want to

soar up, up. Don't you want to fly up to the roof of heaven and sing among the stars?

PIERRETTE. I have been sitting on the moon ever so long, waiting for my lover. Pierrot, let me try on your smile. Give it to me in a kiss.

(*With their hands outstretched behind them, they lean towards each other, till their lips meet in a long kiss.*)

PIERRETTE (*throwing back her head with a deep sigh of happiness*). Oh, I am so happy. This might be the end of all things.

PIERROT. Pierrette, let us sit by the fire and put our feet on the fender, and live happily ever after.

(*They have moved slowly to the settle. As they sit there,* PIERROT *sings softly.*)

"Baby, don't wait for the moon,
The stairs of the sky are so steep;
And mellow and musical June
Is waiting to kiss you to sleep."

(*The lamp on the hood of the chimney-piece has burned down, leaving only the red glow from the fire upon their faces as the* CURTAIN *whispers down to hide them.*)

A NIGHT AT AN INN

BY

LORD DUNSANY

CHARACTERS

A. E. Scott-Fortesque (The Toff), a dilapidated gentleman.

William Jones (Bill)
Albert Thomas
Jacob Smith (Sniggers)
} merchant sailors.

First Priest of Klesh.
Second Priest of Klesh.
Third Priest of Klesh.
Klesh.

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A NIGHT AT AN INN

The curtain rises on a room in an inn. SNIGGERS *and* BILL *are talking.* THE TOFF *is reading a paper.* ALBERT *sits a little apart.*

SNIGGERS. What's his idea, I wonder?

BILL. I don't know.

SNIGGERS. And how much longer will he keep us here?

BILL. We've been here three days.

SNIGGERS. And 'aven't seen a soul.

BILL. And a pretty penny it cost us when he rented the pub.

SNIGGERS. 'Ow long did 'e rent the pub for?

BILL. You never know with him.

SNIGGERS. It's lonely enough.

BILL. 'Ow long did you rent the pub for, Toffy?

(THE TOFF *continues to read a sporting paper; he takes no notice of what is said.*)

SNIGGERS. 'E's *such* a toff.

BILL. Yet 'e's clever, no mistake.

SNIGGERS. Those clever ones are the beggars to make a muddle. Their plans are clever enough, but they don't work, and then they make a mess of things much worse than you or me.

BILL. Ah!

SNIGGERS. I don't like this place.

BILL. Why not?

SNIGGERS. I don't like the looks of it.

BILL. He's keeping us here because here those niggers can't find us. The three heathen priests what was looking for us so. But we want to go and sell our ruby soon.

ALBERT. There's no sense in it.

BILL. Why not, Albert?

ALBERT. Because I gave those black devils the slip in Hull.

BILL. You give 'em the slip, Albert?

ALBERT. The slip, all three of them. The fellows with the gold spots on their foreheads. I had the ruby then and I give them the slip in Hull.

BILL. How did you do it, Albert?

ALBERT. I had the ruby and they were following me—

BILL. Who told them you had the ruby? You didn't show it.

ALBERT. No—But they kind of know.

SNIGGERS. They kind of know, Albert?

ALBERT. Yes, they know if you've got it. Well, they sort of mouched after me, and I tells a policeman and he says, Oh, they were only three poor niggers and they wouldn't hurt me. Ugh! When I thought of what they did in Malta to poor old Jim.

BILL. Yes, and to George in Bombay before we started.

SNIGGERS. Ugh!

BILL. Why didn't you give 'em in charge?

ALBERT. What about the ruby, Bill?

BILL. Ah!

ALBERT. Well, I did better than that. I walks up and down through Hull. I walks slow enough. And then I turns a corner and I runs. I never sees a corner but I turns it. But sometimes I let a corner pass just to fool them. I twists about like a hare. Then I sits down and waits. No priests.

SNIGGERS. What?

ALBERT. No heathen black devils with gold spots on their face. I give 'em the slip.

BILL. Well done, Albert!

SNIGGERS (*after a sigh of content*). Why didn't you tell us?

ALBERT. 'Cause 'e won't let you speak. 'E's got 'is plans and 'e thinks we're silly folk. Things must be done 'is way. And all the time I've give 'em the slip. Might 'ave 'ad one o' them crooked knives in him before now but for me who give 'em the slip in Hull.

BILL. Well done, Albert! Do you hear that, Toffy? Albert has give 'em the slip.

THE TOFF. Yes, I hear.

SNIGGERS. Well, what do you say to that?

THE TOFF. Oh—Well done, Albert!

ALBERT. And what a' you going to do?

THE TOFF. Going to wait.

ALBERT. Don't seem to know what 'e's waiting for.

SNIGGERS. It's a nasty place.

ALBERT. It's getting silly, Bill. Our money's gone and we want to sell the ruby. Let's get on to a town.

BILL. But 'e won't come.

ALBERT. Then we'll leave him.

SNIGGERS. We'll be all right if we keep away from Hull.

ALBERT. We'll go to London.

BILL. But 'e must 'ave 'is share.

SNIGGERS. All right. Only let's go. (*To* THE TOFF). We're going, do you hear? Give us the ruby.

THE TOFF. Certainly. (*He gives them a ruby from his waistcoat pocket; it is the size of a small hen's egg. He goes on reading his paper.*)

ALBERT. Come on, Sniggers. (*Exeunt* ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS.)

BILL. Good-bye, old man. We'll give you your fair share, but there's nothing to do here—no girls, no halls, and we must sell the ruby.

THE TOFF. I'm not a fool, Bill.

BILL. No, no, of course not. Of course you ain't, and you've helped us a lot. Good-by. You'll say good-by?

THE TOFF. Oh, yes. Good-by.

(*Still reads his paper. Exit* BILL. THE TOFF *puts a revolver on the table beside him and goes on with his papers. After a moment the three men come rushing in again, frightened.*)

SNIGGERS (*out of breath*). We've come back, Toffy.

THE TOFF. So you have.

ALBERT. Toffy. . . . How did they get here?

THE TOFF. They walked, of course.

ALBERT. But it's eighty miles.

SNIGGERS. Did you know they were here, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Expected them about now.

ALBERT. Eighty miles!

BILL. Toffy, old man—what are we to do?

THE TOFF. Ask Albert.

BILL. If they can do things like this, there's no one can save us but you, Toffy—I always knew you were a clever one. We won't be fools any more. We'll obey you, Toffy.

THE TOFF. You're brave enough and strong enough. There isn't many that would steal a ruby eye out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools. Jim would have none of my plans, and where's Jim? And George? What did they do to him?

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy!

THE TOFF. Well, then, your strength is no use to you. You want cleverness; or they'll have you the way they had George and Jim.

ALL. Ugh!

THE TOFF. Those black priests would follow you round the world in circles. Year after year, till they got the idol's eye. And if we died with it, they'd follow our grandchildren. That fool thinks he can escape from men like that by running round three streets in the town of Hull.

ALBERT. God's truth, *you* 'aven't escaped them, because they're *'ere*.

THE TOFF. So I supposed.

ALBERT. You *supposed!*

THE TOFF. Yes, I believe there's no announcement in the Society papers. But I took this country seat especially to receive them. There's plenty of room if you dig, it is pleasantly situated, and, what is more important, it is in a very quiet neighborhood. So I am at home to them this afternoon.

BILL. Well, *you're* a deep one.

THE TOFF. And remember, you've only my wits between you and death, and don't put your futile plans against those of an educated gentleman.

ALBERT. If you're a gentleman, why don't you go about among gentlemen instead of the likes of us?

THE TOFF. Because I was too clever for them, as I am too clever for you.

ALBERT. Too clever for them?

THE TOFF. I never lost a game of cards in my life.

BILL. You never lost a game?

THE TOFF. Not when there was money in it.

BILL. Well, well!

THE TOFF. Have a game of poker?

ALL. No, thanks.

THE TOFF. Then do as you're told.

BILL. All right, Toffy.

SNIGGERS. I saw something just then. Hadn't we better draw the curtains?

THE TOFF. No.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. Don't draw the curtains.

SNIGGERS. Oh, all right.

BILL. But, Toffy, they can see us. One doesn't let the enemy do that. I don't see why—

THE TOFF. No, of course you don't.

BILL. Oh, all right, Toffy.

(*All begin to pull out revolvers.*)

THE TOFF (*putting his own away*). No revolvers, please.

ALBERT. Why not?

THE TOFF. Because I don't want any noise at my party. We might get guests that hadn't been invited. Knives are a different matter.

(*All draw knives.* THE TOFF *signs to them not to draw them yet.* TOFFY *has already taken back his ruby.*)

BILL. I think they're coming, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Not yet.

ALBERT. When will they come?

THE TOFF. When I am quite ready to receive them. Not before.

SNIGGERS. I should like to get this over.

THE TOFF. Should you? Then we'll have them now.

SNIGGERS. Now?

THE TOFF. Yes. Listen to me. You shall do as you see me do. You will all pretend to go out. I'll show you how. I've got the ruby. When they see me alone they will come for their idol's eye.

BILL. How can they tell like this which of us has it?

THE TOFF. I confess I don't know, but they seem to.

SNIGGERS. What will you do when they come in?

THE TOFF. I shall do nothing.

SNIGGERS. What?

THE TOFF. They will creep up behind me. Then, my friends, Sniggers and Bill and Albert, who gave them the slip, will do what they can.

BILL. All right, Toffy, trust us.

THE TOFF. If you're a little slow, you will see enacted the cheerful spectacle that accompanied the demise of Jim.

SNIGGERS. Don't, Toffy. We'll be there, all right.

THE TOFF. Very well. Now watch me.

(*He goes past the windows to the inner door right. He opens it inwards, then under cover of the open door, he slips down on his knee and closes it, remaining on the inside, appearing to have gone out. He signs to the others, who understand. Then he appears to re-enter in the same manner.*)

THE TOFF. Now, I shall sit with my back to the door. You go out one by one, so far as our friends can make out. Crouch very low to be on the safe side. They mustn't see you through the window.

(BILL *makes his sham exit.*)

THE TOFF. Remember, no revolvers. The police are, I believe, proverbially inquisitive.

(*The other two follow* BILL. *All three are now crouching inside the door right.* THE TOFF *puts the ruby beside him on the table. He lights a cigarette. The door at the back opens so slowly that you can hardly say at what moment it began.* THE TOFF *picks up his paper. A native of India wriggles along the floor ever so slowly, seeking cover*

THE ENTRANCE OF THE FIRST PRIEST

From a production of "A Night at an Inn," given by the Dramatic Club of the Horace Mann School for Boys.

from chairs. He moves left where THE TOFF *is. The three sailors are right.* SNIGGERS *and* ALBERT *lean forward.* BILL'S *arm keeps them back. An armchair had better conceal them from the Indian. The black* PRIEST *nears* THE TOFF. BILL *watches to see if any more are coming. Then he leaps forward alone—he has taken his boots off—and knifes the* PRIEST. *The* PRIEST *tries to shout but* BILL'S *left hand is over his mouth.* THE TOFF *continues to read his sporting paper. He never looks around.*)

BILL (*sotto voce*). There's only one, Toffy. What shall we do?

THE TOFF (*without turning his head*). Only one?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. Wait a moment. Let me think. (*Still apparently absorbed in his paper.*) Ah, yes. You go back, Bill. We must attract another guest. Now, are you ready?

BILL. Yes.

THE TOFF. All right. You shall now see my demise at my Yorkshire residence. You must receive guests for me. (*He leaps up in full view of the window, flings up both arms and falls to the floor near the dead* PRIEST) Now be ready.

(*His eyes close. There is a long pause. Again the door opens, very, very slowly. Another* PRIEST *creeps in. He has three golden spots upon his forehead. He looks round, then he creeps up to his companion and turns him over and looks inside of his clenched hands. Then he looks at the recumbent* TOFF. *Then he creeps toward*

him. BILL *slips after him and knifes him like the other with his left hand over his mouth.*)

BILL (*sotto voce*). We've only got two, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Still another.

BILL. What'll we do?

THE TOFF (*sitting up*). Hum.

BILL. This is the best way, much.

THE TOFF. Out of the question. Never play the same game twice.

BILL. Why not, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Doesn't work if you do.

BILL. Well?

THE TOFF. I have it, Albert. You will now walk into the room. I showed you how to do it.

ALBERT. Yes.

THE TOFF. Just run over here and have a fight at this window with these two men.

ALBERT. But they're—

THE TOFF. Yes, they're dead, my perspicuous Albert. But Bill and I are going to resuscitate them. . . . Come on.

(BILL *picks up a body under the arms.*)

THE TOFF. That's right, Bill. (*Does the same.*) Come and help us, Sniggers. (SNIGGERS *comes.*) Keep low, keep low. Wave their arms about, Sniggers. Don't show yourself. Now, Albert, over you go. Our Albert is slain. Back you get, Bill. Back, Sniggers. Still, Albert. Mustn't move when he comes. Not a muscle.

(*A face appears at the window and stays for some time.*

Then the door opens and, looking craftily round, the third PRIEST *enters. He looks at his companions' bodies and turns round. He suspects something. He takes up one of the knives and with a knife in each hand he puts his back to the wall. He looks to the left and right.*)

THE TOFF. Come on, Bill. (*The* PRIEST *rushes to the door.* THE TOFF *knifes the last* PRIEST *from behind.*)

THE TOFF. A good day's work, my friends.

BILL. Well done, Toffy. Oh, you are a deep one!

ALBERT. A deep one if ever there was one.

SNIGGERS. There ain't any more, Bill, are there?

THE TOFF. No more in the world, my friend.

BILL. Aye, that's all there are. There were only three in the temple. Three priests and their beastly idol.

ALBERT. What is it worth, Toffy? Is it worth a thousand pounds?

THE TOFF. It's worth all they've got in the shop. Worth just whatever we like to ask for it.

ALBERT. Then we're millionaires now.

THE TOFF. Yes, and, what is more important, we no longer have any heirs.

BILL. We'll have to sell it now.

ALBERT. That won't be easy. It's a pity it isn't small and we had half a dozen. Hadn't the idol any other on him?

BILL. No, he was green jade all over and only had this one eye. He had it in the middle of his forehead and was a long sight uglier than anything else in the world.

SNIGGERS. I'm sure we ought all to be very grateful to Toffy.

BILL. And, indeed, we ought.

ALBERT. If it hadn't been for him—

BILL. Yes, if it hadn't been for old Toffy—

SNIGGERS. He's a deep one.

THE TOFF. Well, you see I just have a knack of foreseeing things.

SNIGGERS. I should think you did.

BILL. Why, I don't suppose anything happens that our Toff doesn't foresee. Does it, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Well, I don't think it does, Bill. I don't think it often does.

BILL. Life is no more than just a game of cards to our old Toff.

THE TOFF. Well, we've taken these fellows' trick.

SNIGGERS (*going to window*). It wouldn't do for anyone to see them.

THE TOFF. Oh, nobody will come this way. We're all alone on a moor.

BILL. Where will we put them?

THE TOFF. Bury them in the cellar, but there's no hurry.

BILL. And what then, Toffy?

THE TOFF. Why, then we'll go to London and upset the ruby business. We have really come through this job very nicely.

BILL. I think the first thing that we ought to do is to give a little supper to old Toffy. We'll bury these fellows tonight.

ALBERT. Yes, let's.

SNIGGERS. The very thing!

BILL. And we'll all drink his health.

ALBERT. Good old Toffy!

SNIGGERS. He ought to have been a general or a premier.

(*They get bottles from cupboard, etc.*)

THE TOFF. Well, we've earned our bit of a supper.

(*They sit down.*)

BILL (*glass in hand*). Here's to old Toffy, who guessed everything!

ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS. Good old Toffy!

BILL. Toffy, who saved our lives and made our fortunes.

ALBERT *and* SNIGGERS. Hear! Hear!

THE TOFF. And here's to Bill, who saved me twice tonight.

BILL. Couldn't have done it but for your cleverness, Toffy.

SNIGGERS. Hear, hear! Hear! Hear!

ALBERT. He foresees everything.

BILL. A speech, Toffy. A speech from our general.

ALL. Yes, a speech.

SNIGGERS. A speech.

THE TOFF. Well, get me some water. This whisky's too much for my head, and I must keep it clear till our friends are safe in the cellar.

BILL. Water? Yes, of course. Get him some water, Sniggers.

SNIGGERS. We don't use water here. Where shall I get it?

BILL. Outside in the garden.

(*Exit* SNIGGERS.)

ALBERT. Here's to future!

BILL. Here's to Albert Thomas, Esquire.

ALBERT. And William Jones, Esquire.

(*Re-enter* SNIGGERS, *terrified.*)

THE TOFF. Hullo, here's Jacob Smith, Esquire, J.P., alias Sniggers, back again.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, I've been thinking about my share in that ruby. I don't want it, Toffy; I don't want it.

THE TOFF. Nonsense, Sniggers. Nonsense.

SNIGGERS. You shall have it, Toffy, you shall have it yourself, only say Sniggers has no share in this 'ere ruby. Say it, Toffy, say it!

BILL. Want to turn informer, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS. No, no. Only I don't want the ruby, Toffy——

THE TOFF. No more nonsense, Sniggers. We're all in together in this. If one hangs, we all hang; but they won't outwit me. Besides, it's not a hanging affair, they had their knives.

SNIGGERS. Toffy, Toffy, I always treated you fair, Toffy. I was always one to say, "Give Toffy a chance." Take back my share, Toffy.

THE TOFF. What's the matter? What are you driving at?

SNIGGERS. Take it back, Toffy.

THE TOFF. Answer me, what are you up to?

SNIGGERS. I don't want my share any more.

BILL. Have you seen the police?

(ALBERT *pulls out his knife.*)

THE TOFF. No, no knives, Albert.

ALBERT. What then?

THE TOFF. The honest truth in open court, barring the ruby. We were attacked.

SNIGGERS. There's no police.

THE TOFF. Well, then, what's the matter?

BILL. Out with it.

SNIGGERS. I swear to God—

ALBERT. Well?

THE TOFF. Don't interrupt.

SNIGGERS. I swear I saw something what I didn't like.

THE TOFF. What you didn't like?

SNIGGERS (*in tears*). O Toffy, Toffy, take it back. Take my share. Say you take it.

THE TOFF. What has he seen?

(*Dead silence, only broken by* SNIGGERS'S *sobs. Then steps are heard. Enter a hideous idol. It is blind and gropes its way. It gropes its way to the ruby and picks it up and screws it into a socket in the forehead.*

SNIGGERS *still weeps softly, the rest stare in horror. The idol steps out, not groping. Its steps move off, then stop.*)

THE TOFF. Oh, great heavens!

ALBERT (*in a childish, plaintive voice*). What is it, Toffy?

BILL. Albert, it is that obscene idol (*In a whisper.*) come from India.

ALBERT. It is gone.

BILL. It has taken its eye.

SNIGGERS. We are saved.

A VOICE OFF (*with outlandish accent*). Meestaire William Jones, Able Seaman.

(THE TOFF *has never spoken, never moved. He only gazes stupidly in horror.*)

BILL. Albert, Albert, what is this?

(*He rises and walks out. One moan is heard.* SNIGGERS *goes to the window. He falls back sickly.*)

ALBERT (*in a whisper*). What has happened?

SNIGGERS. I have seen it. I have seen it. Oh, I have seen it! (*He returns to table.*)

THE TOFF (*laying his hand very gently on* SNIGGERS'S *arm, speaking softly and winningly*). What was it, Sniggers?

SNIGGERS. I have seen it.

ALBERT. What?

SNIGGERS. Oh!

VOICE. Meestaire Albert Thomas, Able Seaman.

ALBERT. Must I go, Toffy? Toffy, must I go?

SNIGGERS (*clutching him*). Don't move.

ALBERT (*going*). Toffy, Toffy. (*Exit.*)

VOICE. Meestaire Jacob Smith, Able Seaman.

SNIGGERS. I can't go, Toffy. I can't go. I can't do it. (*He goes.*)

VOICE. Meestaire Arnold Everett Scott-Fortescue, late Esquire, Able Seaman.

THE TOFF. I did not foresee it. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN

THE BRINK OF SILENCE

BY

ESTHER E. GALBRAITH

CAST

COLE.
MACREADY.
DARTON.
JOHNSON.

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Application for the right of performing " The Brink of Silence " must be made to Miss Esther E. Galbraith, 3425 Fourteenth Street, N. E., Washington, D. C.

THE BRINK OF SILENCE

SCENE. *The scene is inside a log house on a rocky island far down in the Antarctic. There is an outer door at the back; no windows; down right an inner door to another room. There is a bunk against the left wall; an oil stove burning, down left; a rough table at the center. There is one chair and a box which serves as one. The room is entirely bare of ornament; there are a few battered books and magazines piled on a packing box which has been improvised for a cupboard in the corner, up right.* COLE *is seated at the table playing solitaire in the light of an oil lamp.* MACREADY *is pacing slowly at the back of the room. Both men wear heavy sweaters and boots. Fur coats and gloves are hung on the wall. Neither speaks for a minute after the curtain rises.*

MACREADY. For God's sake, Cole—say something! Anything to break this cursed quiet.—God, I'd like to go home this winter, wouldn't you!

COLE. England isn't home.—No, I'm here for a few more seasons in this nest of blizzards and I'll see it through.

MAC. It isn't too late for the boat to make another trip with supplies.

COLE. We've enough to last if she doesn't come before the force gets here next summer.

MAC. If she does come, I'm going back with her and so are you.

COLE. Nope.

MAC. Aw—nobody cares whether we spend the winter here or not. Nothing would be said one way or the other.

COLE. Well, you go ahead. There'll be that much more tobacco for me.

MAC. Go and leave you alone? Suppose you got sick here by yourself.

COLE. I haven't been sick in the past eight years.

MAC. But we need to get out. We need to see civilization again. We'll be a pair of savages soon.

COLE. We don't belong to a race that goes downhill because the climate's hot or cold, nor from living six hundred miles from the nearest human. You know that as well as I do.

MAC. You couldn't stand the silence, Cole.

COLE. I don't mind it; I've stood it a long time.

MAC. I've had two years of it, and it's all I want. I want to see cities—and men and women and children. I've got two little nephews in Manchester. One's nine and the other's twelve. I'd give the world to see them tonight. You're a queer one—not wanting to go back.

COLE (*after a pause*). Mac—I can't go back.

MAC (*staring at him*). I don't believe it.

COLE. Did you ever hear of the Darton expedition?

MAC. Think I did—Sir Gilbert Darton—about ten years ago. Seems to me—They never came back, did they?

COLE. The expedition never came back. I am Darton!

MAC. Sir Gilbert Darton?

COLE. Yes—I lost my ship—that was the first of a series of disasters. Two injuries to men tied us up. Our small boats were useless because of ice conditions and our food was nearly gone before five of us were able to get off to try to reach help. We made progress for a few days and then a blizzard that would make ten of yesterday's storm struck us. We'd had little to eat and were too weak to handle the boat. It was simply dashed ashore on the rocky side of this island.—I got through alive; no one else did.—Lauter was here then and he found me. He didn't know who I was. It was six months before a whaler touched. I learned that the relief expedition had reached the men we were trying to save—too late. I went out with the whaler to Buenos Aires, to a hospital. Months later when I recovered, I learned that the Darton expedition had been given up as a total tragedy.—And I learned that my own place had closed up; that I was a living dead man.

MAC. What do you mean?

COLE. I read in a London paper that Lady Darton was to be married—married to a man named Carruthers.

MAC. And you didn't—?

COLE. No one ever knew. I took the name of Ernest Cole and came back here to stay.

MAC. So—that's it.

COLE. It seemed only justice. I had asked a beautiful, willful woman to give up the best years of her life to waiting and loneliness, with an ugly fear always hovering over her heart. That's the portion of an explorer's wife. And I had no right to come back—a broken failure—and stand between her and happiness.—I made my decision, but I had to fight the impulse to claim my own.

MAC. Were there—any children?

COLE. A son. He was sixteen when I saw him last. I had planned to take him out with me on my next trip. I'd dreamed of months of comradeship that would make up for the years we'd spent apart. I thought perhaps he'd become an explorer and go on with my work. But his mother's happiness was at stake. I couldn't interfere.—God, how I wanted to see the boy!

MAC. And haven't you seen him since?

COLE. No. I couldn't go back. I might have been recognized. The fear of that drove me back—back here. Lauter was gone and I took his place at this station.

MAC. It's all wrong, Cole. You're too big a man to throw yourself away like this. You're wrong.

COLE. There was nothing else to do. I've left them a memory they can't be ashamed of.—I seldom think of England now. The distance, the stillness help me to forget. It's only the thought of my work—the work that was my life—that other men are carrying on. It gnaws and gnaws—God! It's worse than hunger!

MAC. Time makes a lot of difference. Things might be changed in England. You might find a way to go back. If not—it's a big world. You could go to America and perhaps take up your work.

COLE. I could never take up my work. Sooner or later I would come in contact with men who would recognize me.

MAC. I wish you'd get out of this with me.

COLE. Don't worry about me, Mac. What's the use! The only place I have now is here—in the frozen wilderness, with my dream of conquering it that I can never make real.—And some day I'll learn that Remensen or Courcelle has made the trip.

MAC. You ought to get out of this.

COLE (*breaking out*). I ought to have drowned out there with my men ten years ago.

MAC. There, you see. It's this silence makes you say things like that.

COLE. But the silence would always call me back.

(MACREADY *can think of no more arguments. For a moment neither speaks.* MAC *gets a book, brings it down near the lamp and begins to read.*)

MAC. I think they'll send the whaler down. It isn't often she could make the trip this late. Been a queer season, hasn't it?

COLE. There hasn't been a season like it for years. I never saw one like it. We ought to have been frozen in tight two weeks ago.

MAC. It's pretty solid just south, I think. Yesterday's storm looked like winter, sure enough.

COLE. With a season like this I could have made it. The best summer I've ever seen. It's a big dream, Mac, crossing the end of the earth through that stark desolation—and this was the year the right man could have done it.

DARTON'S VOICE (*some distance outside*). Hallo! Hallo, there.

COLE. What's that!

(*Both start to the door.*)

MAC (*opening door*). Two men. One's hurt or frozen.

(DARTON *and* JOHNSON *appear at the door. Both are under thirty.* DARTON'S *dress and equipment are in good condition, and in spite of the awkwardness of fur garments, he is fine looking.* JOHNSON *has his arm over* DARTON'S *shoulder and the latter is practically carrying him. There is a bleeding cut in his forehead and he is rather ragged.*)

COLE. What's wrong.

DARTON (*coming in*). Nothing much, I guess. Bad landing over there. He was knocked down and got a nasty cut.

(MAC *steps to* JOHNSON'S *side and they get him on the bunk.*)

COLE (*hurrying into the other room*). We can fix him up.

(DARTON *is taking off* JOHNSON'S *hood. There is a short cry of pain.*)

DARTON. Sorry, old man. Is that better?

MAC. Better leave your partner to Cole. He's quite a doctor.

COLE (*re-enters, carrying a tin box and bandage*). I'll put on the bandage. Have something warm.

(DARTON *takes off his gloves and* MACREADY *hands him a cup of steaming broth from the pot on the stove.*)

DARTON (*takes it, smiles, and impulsively extends his hand*). Thanks. This is great.

MAC (*shaking hands*). How'd you get here?

DARTON. I came down in the *Pathfinder* to bring out a party we left last year. Johnson was one of them. We located them but couldn't take the ship in, so ten of us went in boats. Got them all out, but yesterday's storm drove us away from the *Pathfinder*, and we landed on the other side of the island. Rest of our people are making camp until the ship picks us up.

COLE. This is Parker's Island.

DARTON. Yes. We located ourselves after landing. Didn't know there was a settlement. Saw your light and brought Johnson across. He was pretty badly done up before his accident. His party's had a bad time since last year. We didn't reach them much too soon.—You here all alone?

MAC. The company sends a force down during the season to get penguin and whale oil; the rest of the time we're alone. No other ships touch here.

DARTON. Been at it long?

MAC. Cole's been at it eight years. I've only been here two.

DARTON. Isn't it pretty close to the edge?

MAC. It is the edge!

DARTON (*half to himself*). The brink of silence.

COLE (*coming toward him*). That's my name for it—the great white silence.

DARTON. A man can't forget the Antarctic. The crude flaming color of the sunrise—the blue of the moon on the great white reaches in the long night, and the weird bright curtains of the Aurora—once he's seen them he never forgets.

COLE. But it's the silence that brings him back. There's none of the muddled, squirming turmoil of life out here. Just the infinite patience of nature, waiting in endless suspense—silent. You seem always very close to the answer.

MAC. The answer? What are you talking about, Cole?

COLE (*to* DARTON). Macready's a Presbyterian.

MAC. What's that got to do with it?

COLE. Nothing whatever.

DARTON (*smiling, turns to the stove and throws off his hood*). (*To* COLE.) You've been further out?

(*As* COLE *hesitates,* JOHNSON *stirs and tries to sit up.*)

JOHNSON. Darton, are you there? Darton!

(COLE *starts violently. His expression is mingled amazement and fear, and he stands as if at bay, staring at them. Then as* DARTON *steps to the bunk, he understands.*)

DARTON. Lie down, Johnson. It's all right.

JOHNSON. I thought for a minute I was back in the hut—that you hadn't come for us. (*His voice is thick and he stammers a little.*)

DARTON. Of course, it's me. Are you cold?

JOHNSON. Nearly frozen. Can't you give me something to eat now?

(MACREADY *fills a cup.*)

DARTON. Yes, you can have a lot to eat now. Just had to be careful at first, you know.

(*He hands the cup to* JOHNSON, *who, instead of taking it, clutches his arm.*)

JOHNSON. And you have come, Darton?

DARTON. Of course I have, you big fool. Drink some of this now.

(COLE *remains at the window, some distance from the light. When he speaks, it is in a strained voice which he tries to make natural.*)

COLE. Were you trying to make the trip across?

DARTON. Yes. It's the fourth attempt.

MAC. Yours?

DARTON. No. My father made the first. You probably heard of the Darton expedition about ten years ago—

MAC (*quickly*). Yes, I heard of it.

DARTON. He didn't make it and he never got back. Two others have tried it since—Remensen and Courcelle.

COLE. And they—

DARTON. They had to turn back. We've had a good season, and luck, too, I guess. Anyhow, we did it.

COLE. Do you mean—?

DARTON. We came out at Ross Sea last month. We'd separated from Johnson's party on this side and hurried over to pick them up. Thought something

might be wrong, and something was. Soon after we left, they were caught in the nips, drifted for weeks, and finally their ship was crushed by the grinding.

COLE. You must have come out in fine shape to be here already.

DARTON. We did. Every man!

COLE. And who's your leader?

DARTON. I am—

COLE (*comes back to him and starts to put his hand on his shoulder, then stops*). That's wonderful!

DARTON. It's great of you to understand.

COLE. I do understand. You went through that bleak fury and came out safe. You made it! You won!

MAC. It's a queer thing.

DARTON. I suppose it is. The spirit of the men who have faced it and fought it and died in it seems to draw you on. I think that's why I finished my father's job. (*There is a sound of distant cheering.*) Listen, that means they've sighted the *Pathfinder*. I'll have to get back.—I'm afraid Johnson can't travel yet—

MAC. Can't you leave him here for a while?

DARTON. Thanks. He needs to sleep. I'll be busy and I won't get back, but I'll send some one across in half an hour.

MAC. I'd like to see the party. Can't I come over with him?

COLE. And if the *Pathfinder* will take a passenger north—

DARTON. Yourself? Glad to.

COLE. No. Macready was planning to go back if the company's ship came down. I'm staying.

DARTON (*to* MACREADY). I'll expect you. (*To* COLE.) Good-by, Mr. Cole.

COLE. Good-by, my boy. (*Stands at the door looking after him.*)

MAC. Your son!

COLE. Yes.

MAC. Are you going to let him go like that?

COLE. Yes. After all, my work is done—and my boy did it.

MAC. Aw—it's all wrong. Why—

(*But* COLE *does not hear him.*)

COLE (*sits down at the table and slowly takes up the pack of cards*). Wasn't it funny, Mac? He called me—Mr. Cole!

CURTAIN

THE RISING OF THE MOON

BY

LADY GREGORY

PERSONS

SERGEANT.
POLICEMAN X.
POLICEMAN B.
A RAGGED MAN.

From *Seven Short Plays*, by Lady Gregory. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York and London.

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THE RISING OF THE MOON

SCENE. *Side of a quay in a seaport town. Some posts and chains. A large barrel. Enter three policemen. Moonlight.*

SERGEANT, *who is older than the others, crosses the stage to right and looks down steps. The others put down a pastepot and unroll a bundle of placards.*

POLICEMAN B. I think this would be a good place to put up a notice. (*He points to barrel.*)

POLICEMAN X. Better ask him. (*Calls to Sergeant.*) Will this be a good place for a placard?

(*No answer.*)

POLICEMAN B. Will we put up a notice here on the barrel?

(*No answer.*)

SERGEANT. There's a flight of steps here that leads to the water. This is a place that should be minded well. If he got down here, his friends might have a boat to meet him; they might send it in here from outside.

POLICEMAN B. Would the barrel be a good place to put a notice up?

SERGEANT. It might; you can put it there.

(*They paste the notice up.*)

SERGEANT (*reading it*). Dark hair—dark eyes, smooth face, height five feet five—there's not much to take hold of in that.—It's a pity I had no chance of seeing him before he broke out of gaol. They say he's a wonder, that it's he makes all the plans for the whole organization. There isn't another man in Ireland would have broken gaol the way he did. He must have some friends among the gaolers.

POLICEMAN B. A hundred pounds is little enough for the Government to offer for him. You may be sure any man in the force that takes him will get promotion.

SERGEANT. I'll mind this place myself. I wouldn't wonder at all if he came this way. He might come slipping along there, (*Points to side of quay.*) and his friends might be waiting for him there, (*Points down steps.*) and once he got away it's little chance we'd have of finding him; it's maybe under a load of kelp he'd be in a fishing boat, and not one to help a married man that wants it to the reward.

POLICEMAN X. And if we get him itself, nothing but abuse on our heads for it from the people, and maybe from our own relations.

SERGEANT. Well, we have to do our duty in the force. Haven't we the whole country depending on us to keep law and order? It's those that are down would be up and those that are up would be down, if it wasn't for us. Well, hurry on, you have plenty of other places to placard yet, and come back here then to me. You can take the lantern. Don't be too long

now. It's very lonesome here with nothing but the moon.

POLICEMAN B. It's a pity we can't stop with you. The Government should have brought more police into the town, with him in gaol, and at assize time too. Well, good luck to your watch.

(*They go out.*)

SERGEANT (*walks up and down once or twice and looks at placard*). A hundred pounds and promotion sure. There must be a great deal of spending in a hundred pounds. It's a pity some honest man not to be the better of that.

(*A ragged man appears at left and tries to slip past.* SERGEANT *suddenly turns.*)

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. I'm a poor ballad-singer, your honor. I thought to sell some of these (*Holds out bundle of ballads.*) to sailors. (*He goes on.*)

SERGEANT. Stop! Didn't I tell you to stop? You can't go on there.

MAN. Oh, very well. It's a hard thing to be poor. All the world's against the poor!

SERGEANT. Who are you?

MAN. You'd be as wise as myself if I told you, but I don't mind. I'm one Jimmy Walsh, a ballad-singer.

SERGEANT. Jimmy Walsh? I don't know that name.

MAN. Ah, sure, they know it well enough in Ennis. Were you ever in Ennis, sergeant?

SERGEANT. What brought you here?

MAN. Sure, it's to the assizes I came, thinking I might make a few shillings here or there. It's in the one train with the judges I came.

SERGEANT. Well, if you came so far, you may as well go farther, for you'll walk out of this.

MAN. I will, I will; I'll just go on where I was going. (*Goes toward steps.*)

SERGEANT. Come back from those steps; no one has leave to pass down them tonight.

MAN. I'll just sit on the top of the steps till I see will some sailor buy a ballad off me that would give me my supper. They do be late going back to the ship. It's often I saw them in Cork carried down the quay in a hand-cart.

SERGEANT. Move on, I tell you. I won't have any one lingering about the quay tonight.

MAN. Well, I'll go. It's the poor have the hard life! Maybe yourself might like one, sergeant. Here's a good sheet now. (*Turns one over.*) "Content and a Pipe"—that's not much. "The Peeler and the Goat"—you wouldn't like that. "Johnny Hart"—that's a lovely song.

SERGEANT. Move on.

MAN. Ah, wait till you hear it. (*Sings.*)

"There was a rich farmer's daughter lived near the town of Ross;
She courted a Highland soldier, his name was Johnny Hart;
Says the mother to her daughter, 'I'll go distracted mad
If you marry that Highland soldier dressed up in Highland plaid.'"

SERGEANT. Stop that noise.

(MAN *wraps up his ballads and shuffles towards the steps.*)

SERGEANT. Where are you going?

MAN. Sure you told me to be going, and I am going.

SERGEANT. Don't be a fool. I didn't tell you to go that way. I told you to go back to the town.

MAN. Back to the town, is it?

SERGEANT (*taking him by the shoulder and shoving him before him*). Here, I'll show you the way. Be off with you. What are you stopping for?

MAN (*who has been keeping his eye on the notice, points to it*). I think I know what you're waiting for, sergeant.

SERGEANT. What's that to you?

MAN. And I know well the man you're waiting for—I know him well—I'll be going. (*He shuffles on.*)

SERGEANT. You know him? Come back here. What sort is he?

MAN. Come back is it, sergeant? Do you want to have me killed?

SERGEANT. Why do you say that?

MAN. Never mind. I'm going. I wouldn't be in your shoes if the reward was ten times as much. (*Goes on off stage to left.*) Not if it was ten times as much.

SERGEANT (*rushing after him*). Come back here, come back. (*Drags him back.*) What sort is he? Where did you see him?

MAN. I saw him in my own place, in the County Clare. I tell you you wouldn't like to be looking at him. You'd be afraid to be in the one place with him. There

isn't a weapon he doesn't know the use of, and as to strength, his muscles are as hard as that board. (*Slapping barrel.*)

SERGEANT. Is he as bad as that?

MAN. He is then.

SERGEANT. Do you tell me so?

MAN. There was a poor man in our place, a sergeant from Ballyvaughan.—It was with a lump of stone he did it.

SERGEANT. I never heard of that.

MAN. And you wouldn't, sergeant. It's not everything that happens gets into the papers. And there was a policeman in plain clothes, too.—It is in Limerick he was.—It was after the time of the attack on the police barrack at Kilmallock.—Moonlight—just like this—waterside.—Nothing was known for certain.

SERGEANT. Do you say so? It's a terrible county to belong to.

MAN. That's so, indeed! You might be standing there, looking out that way, thinking you saw him coming up this side of the quay (*Points.*), and he might be coming up this other side (*Points.*), and he'd be on you before you knew where you were.

SERGEANT. It's a whole troop of police they ought to put here to stop a man like that.

MAN. But if you'd like me to stop with you, I could be looking down this side. I could be sitting up here on this barrel.

SERGEANT. And you know him well, too?

MAN. I'd know him a mile off, sergeant.

SERGEANT. But you wouldn't want to share the reward?

MAN. Is it a poor man like me, that has to be going the roads and singing in fairs, to have the name on him that he took a reward? But you don't want me. I'll be safer in the town.

SERGEANT. Well, you can stop.

MAN (*getting up on barrel*). All right, sergeant. I wonder now, you're not tired out, sergeant, walking up and down the way you are.

SERGEANT. If I'm tired I'm used to it.

MAN. You might have hard work before you to-night yet. Take it easy while you can. There's plenty of room up here on the barrel, and you see farther when you're higher up.

SERGEANT. Maybe so. (*Gets up beside him on barrel, facing right. They sit back to back, looking different ways.*) You made me feel a bit queer with the way you talked.

MAN. Give me a match, sergeant. (*He gives it and man lights pipe.*) Take a draw yourself? It'll quiet you. Wait now till I give you a light, but you needn't turn round. Don't take your eye off the quay for the life of you.

SERGEANT. Never fear, I won't. (*Lights pipe. They both smoke.*) Indeed it's a hard thing to be in the force, out at night and no thanks for it, for all the danger we're in. And it's little we get but abuse from the people, and no choice but to obey our orders, and never asked when a man is sent into danger, if you are a married man with a family.

MAN (*sings*).

"As through the hills I walked to view the hills and shamrock plain,
I stood awhile where nature smiles to view the rocks and streams,
On a matron fair I fixed my eyes beneath a fertile vale,
As she sang her song it was on the wrong of poor old Granuaile."

SERGEANT. Stop that; that's no song to be singing in these times.

MAN. Ah, sergeant, I was only singing to keep my heart up. It sinks when I think of him. To think of us two sitting here, and he creeping up the quay, maybe, to get to us.

SERGEANT. Are you keeping a good lookout?

MAN. I am; and for no reward too. Amn't I the foolish man? But when I saw a man in trouble, I never could help trying to get him out of it. What's that? Did something hit me? (*Rubs his heart.*)

SERGEANT (*patting him on the shoulder*). You will get your reward in heaven.

MAN. I know that, I know that, sergeant, but life is precious.

SERGEANT. Well, you can sing if it gives you more courage.

MAN (*sings*).

"Her head was bare, her hands and feet with iron bands were bound,
Her pensive strain and plaintive wail mingles with the evening gale,
And the song she sang with mournful air, I am old Granuaile.
Her lips so sweet that monarchs kissed . . ."

SERGEANT. That's not it.——"Her gown she wore was stained with gore."——That's it—you missed that.

MAN. You're right, sergeant, so it is; I missed it. (*Repeats line.*) But to think of a man like you knowing a song like that.

SERGEANT. There's many a thing a man might know and might not have any wish for.

MAN. Now, I daresay, sergeant, in your youth, you used to be sitting up on a wall, the way you are sitting up on this barrel now, and the other lads beside you, and you singing "Granuaile?"—

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Shan Bhean Bhocht?"

SERGEANT. I did then.

MAN. And the "Green on the Cape?"

SERGEANT. That was one of them.

MAN. And maybe the man you are watching for tonight used to be sitting on the wall, when he was young, and singing those same songs—It's a queer world—

SERGEANT. Whisht!—I think I see something coming.—It's only a dog.

MAN. And isn't it a queer world?—Maybe it's one of the boys you used to be singing with that time you will be arresting today or tomorrow, and sending into the dock—

SERGEANT. That's true indeed.

MAN. And maybe one night, after you had been singing, if the other boys had told you some plan they had, some plan to free the country, you might have

joined with them—and maybe it is you might be in trouble now.

SERGEANT. Well, who knows but I might? I had a great spirit in those days.

MAN. It's a queer world, sergeant, and it's little any mother knows when she sees her child creeping on the floor what might happen to it before it has gone through its life, or who will be who in the end.

SERGEANT. That's a queer thought now, and a true thought. Wait now till I think it out.—If it wasn't for the sense I have, and for my wife and family, and for me joining the force the time I did, it might be myself now would be after breaking gaol and hiding in the dark, and it might be him that's hiding in the dark and that got out of gaol would be sitting up where I am on this barrel.—And it might be myself would be creeping up trying to make my escape from himself, and it might be himself would be keeping the law, and myself would be breaking it, and myself would be trying maybe to put a bullet in his head, or to take up a lump of a stone the way you said he did—no, that myself did.—Oh! (*Gasps. After a pause.*) What's that? (*Grasps man's arm.*)

MAN (*jumps off barrel and listens, looking out over water*). It's nothing, sergeant.

SERGEANT. I thought it might be a boat. I had a notion there might be friends of his coming about the quays with a boat.

MAN. Sergeant, I am thinking it was with the people you were, and not with the law you were, when you were a young man.

SERGEANT. Well, if I was foolish then, that time's gone.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, it comes into your head sometimes, in spite of your belt and your tunic, that it might have been as well for you to have followed Granuaile.

SERGEANT. It's no business of yours what I think.

MAN. Maybe, sergeant, you'll be on the side of the country yet.

SERGEANT (*gets off barrel*). Don't talk to me like that. I have my duties and I know them. (*Looks round.*) That was a boat; I hear the oars. (*Goes to the steps and looks down.*)

MAN (*sings*).

"O, then, tell me, Shawn O'Farrell,
Where the gathering is to be.
In the old spot by the river
Right well known to you and me!"

SERGEANT. Stop that! Stop that, I tell you!

MAN (*sings louder*).

"One word more, for signal token,
Whistle up the marching tune,
With your pike upon your shoulder,
At the Rising of the Moon."

SERGEANT. If you don't stop that, I'll arrest you.

(*A whistle from below answers, repeating the air.*)

SERGEANT. That's a signal. (*Stands between him and steps.*) You must not pass this way.—Step farther back.—Who are you? You are no ballad-singer.

MAN. You needn't ask who I am; that placard will tell you. (*Points to placard.*)

SERGEANT. You are the man I am looking for.

MAN (*takes off hat and wig. Sergeant seizes them.*) I am. There's a hundred pounds on my head. There is a friend of mine below in a boat. He knows a safe place to bring me to.

SERGEANT (*looking still at hat and wig*). It's a pity! It's a pity. You deceived me. You deceived me well.

MAN. I am a friend of Granuaile. There is a hundred pounds on my head.

SERGEANT. It's a pity, it's a pity!

MAN. Will you let me pass, or must I make you let me?

SERGEANT. I am in the force. I will not let you pass.

MAN. I thought to do it with my tongue. (*Puts hand in breast.*) What is that?

VOICE OF POLICEMAN X (*outside*). Here, this is where we left him.

SERGEANT. It's my comrades coming.

MAN. You won't betray me—the friend of Granuaile. (*Slips behind barrel.*)

VOICE OF POLICEMAN B. That was the last of the placards.

POLICEMAN X (*as they come in*). If he makes his escape, it won't be unknown he'll make it.

(SERGEANT *puts hat and wig behind his back.*)

POLICEMAN B. Did anyone come this way?

SERGEANT (*after a pause*). No one.

POLICEMAN B. No one at all?

SERGEANT. No one at all.

POLICEMAN B. We had no orders to go back to the station; we can stop along with you.

SERGEANT. I don't want you. There is nothing for you to do here.

POLICEMAN B. You bade us to come back here and keep watch with you.

SERGEANT. I'd sooner be alone. Would any man come this way and you making all that talk? It is better the place be quiet.

POLICEMAN B. Well, we'll leave you the lantern anyhow. (*Hands it to him.*)

SERGEANT. I don't want it. Bring it with you.

POLICEMAN B. You might want it. There are clouds coming up and you have the darkness of the night before you yet. I'll leave it over here on the barrel. (*Goes to barrel.*)

SERGEANT. Bring it with you I tell you. No more talk.

POLICEMAN B. Well, I thought it might be a comfort to you. I often think when I have it in my hand and can be flashing it about in every dark corner (*Doing so.*) that it's the same as being beside the fire at home, and the bits of bogwood blazing up now and again. (*Flashes it about, now on the barrel, now on* SERGEANT.)

SERGEANT (*furious*). Be off, the two of you, yourselves and your lantern!

(*They go out.* MAN *comes from behind barrel. He and* SERGEANT *stand looking at one another.*)

SERGEANT. What are you waiting for?

MAN. For my hat, of course, and my wig. You wouldn't wish me to get my death of cold?

(SERGEANT *gives them.*)

MAN (*going towards steps*). Well, good night, comrade, and thank you. You did me a good turn tonight, and I'm obliged to you. Maybe I'll be able to do as much for you when the small rise up and the big fall down—when we all change places at the Rising (*Waves his hand and disappears.*) of the Moon.

SERGEANT (*turning his back to audience and reading placard*). A hundred pounds reward! A hundred pounds! (*Turns towards audience.*) I wonder, now, am I as great a fool as I think I am?

CURTAIN

THE SILVER LINING

BY

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

CHARACTERS

FANNY BURNEY.
RICHARD BURNEY, her uncle.
CEPHAS, an old servant.

PLACE: Chessington.
TIME: 1778.
SCENE: Library in Mr. Crisp's house.

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THE SILVER LINING

A pleasant room, a trifle littered with books and papers. All across the background, windows curtained in palely flowered damask. A hearth at left, with a fire burning rosily. Brass andirons. A bellows. Near the hearth, facing audience, a dark wooden settle with a high back. It is handsomely carved and appears to be quite old. Candles in silver candlesticks are lighted on the hearth shelf, and there are also framed silhouettes standing there.

At right, near background, a door opening into another room of the house. Also at left, towards foreground, a round table with a lighted candelabra, several drawings in striking black and white. A brass inkstand, sand, quills, pens, etc. All along the right wall a dark bookcase full to running over with books. Its top shelf is piled high with them. Their covers are mostly brown and musty. There are also black, dark blue, and green ones, but none in bright colors.

At the rise of the curtain FANNY BURNEY, *rather small, delicate, with a girlishly pretty face and softly curling unpowdered hair sits writing at the table, a small work-bag and sampler lying on her lap. She wears a pale yellow dress, flowered in white, over a pale yellow petticoat, and a white lace fichu. Black velvet ribbon at her throat, and about her wrists. She is deep in her work when there is the*

sound of some one opening the door at right. With amazing swiftness FANNY *drops her pen, sweeps the drawings over what she is writing, drops her sampler and bag on top of them, and is crocheting when her uncle,* RICHARD BURNEY, *enters. He is a tall, portly, ruddy man, with a most important manner. He wears a handsome plum-colored traveling suit, and carries a long church warden pipe which he lights without a "by your leave" at his first opportunity.*

RICHARD BURNEY

Well, Fanny!

FANNY BURNEY
(*surprised*)

Uncle!

RICHARD BURNEY

Cephas welcomed me.
There's no one else about as I can see.
(FANNY *drops a flurried curtsey.*)
Where's Mrs. Gast?

FANNY BURNEY

In bed. And Daddy Crisp
Has gone to London.

RICHARD BURNEY

Cephas, with his lisp,
Has so informed me. And I also know
Your father left here just three days ago,
So I have missed him. Lord! What a to-do!
I'm just from town myself. Child, how are you?

FANNY BURNEY
(*prettily*)

Quite well, and hope my kinsfolk are the same.

RICHARD BURNEY

Um. Yes.

FANNY BURNEY

What news?

RICHARD BURNEY

The whole town rings with fame
Of a new author, who has writ a book
Called "Evelina." Everywhere you look
You see it advertised. Yet no one knows
The author's name and rumor madly goes
Naming first this one, and then that one.

FANNY BURNEY
(*passionately*)

Oh,
If they should ever guess! (*She grows pale.*)

RICHARD BURNEY

They're sure to know
Sooner or later. Burke sat up all night
To read it. Said if he could guess aright
The author's name, that fifty pounds he'd give,
While Dr. Johnson cried out: "As I live
I can't forget the book. It's my delight!"
Why, Fanny! How you look! First red, then white.

FANNY BURNEY
(*trying to speak without a tremor*)

You see, in Chessington, our life is dull,
And everything you say seems wonderful,
And stirs the heart like bells of London town.
And so this—"Katherina" wins renown?

RICHARD BURNEY

Nay, "Evelina," so the novel's named.
The author who has written it is famed
Forever. 'Tis a puzzle. No one can
Be positive who is the lucky man.
If, when I've read it, I have found 'twill do
For you to read, 'twill be permitted you.

FANNY BURNEY
(*demurely*)

Thank you.

RICHARD BURNEY

How's Charles?

FANNY BURNEY

My father's vastly well,
And busy.

RICHARD BURNEY

Humph, I think that I could tell
That without asking. Times are hard. I saw
A friend of Charles' last night—young Clapperclaw,
Who swears that Clark wrote "Evelina." Fool!

But when I said 'twas more like Fielding's school,
Mrs. Thrale looked at me the oddest way,
Said: "*Did you get the note I sent today?*
Go search for 'Evelina' nearer home.
If you would find her, you've not far to roam."
(FANNY *turns and looks at him, aghast; but he continues placidly.*)
I think she means that Anstey's written it.
But, Lord, I'm sure that he has not the wit!
Although the strangest people try to write:
Children and fools. I've not forgot the night
Your father found *you* at it, clipped your wing,
Forbade such nonsense and then burned the thing,
And brought you to your senses. Pen and ink
Are not for women, but for men who think.
Females are cackling geese. 'Tis only men
Who have the strength of mind to wield a pen.

FANNY BURNEY
(*picking up pen from table*)

And yet this pen is made from a goose feather!

RICHARD BURNEY
(*frowning*)

Well, pens and women do not go together.
A bluestocking is a disguise. (*Yawns.*) Heigho!
The hour grows late. I'll take my candle.
(*He crosses to table, takes candle, and pauses to pick up drawings for inspection. As he lifts one it catches on the manuscript beneath, and the latter sweeps to the floor, and falls with pages outspread.*)

FANNY BURNEY
(*with a stifled exclamation*)
Oh!

RICHARD BURNEY
(*puzzled; then angry*)

What's this? (*Picks up a few pages.*) Great heavens!
Fanny! Well, I swear.
You *have* been writing! And you've hid it there
Behind your sampler. Wait till Charles hears this!

FANNY BURNEY
(*imploring him*)

Oh, Uncle Richard, if you'll—

RICHARD BURNEY

Silence, miss!
You should be shamed to look me in the face.
Thank God that no one else knows this disgrace.
How far has this thing gone? Come, answer me.
Who else has seen this rubbish besides me?

FANNY BURNEY
(*terrified*)

Oh, Uncle—

RICHARD BURNEY
(*with mounting rage*)

Wait till Charles and I confer!
Who else?

FANNY BURNEY
(*between sobs*)

I've sent it to a publisher.

RICHARD BURNEY
(*furiously*)

Fanny! Don't tell me you have been so bold!

FANNY BURNEY
(*sobbing wildly*)

Oh,—worse—than—that! *The—book's already—sold.*

RICHARD BURNEY
(*starting violently*)

Sold! Why, God bless me! Fanny, you don't say
That you got money for it? (*He stares at her, open-mouthed.*)

FANNY BURNEY
(*with a fresh burst of tears*)

Yes today
A—check—came—

RICHARD BURNEY
(*eagerly*)

For how much?

FANNY BURNEY
(*choked with sobs*)

Two—hundred—pounds.

RICHARD BURNEY

(*staggered*)

Two hun— Why, Fanny. I am dreaming! Zounds!
When did you write?

FANNY BURNEY

(*struggling for self-control*)

A little, every day
I covered it with samplers and crochet.
(*She wipes her eyes.*)

RICHARD BURNEY

(*quite mollified*)

What's the book called?

FANNY BURNEY

(*trembling*)

'Tis "Evelina."

RICHARD BURNEY

(*stunned*)

You
Wrote "Evelina"? (FANNY *nods.*) Lord! What a to-do!
When Burke hears this! That Clapperclaw's a fool!
(*with triumph*)
I knew the book came from some other school!
(*expands as if talking to imaginary people*)
"My niece, the authoress. . . "

FANNY BURNEY
(*approaching him humbly*)

Uncle, I know
I've been deceitful, but I loved it so
My book. Forgive me. I won't write again.

RICHARD BURNEY

Eh? Oh, tut, tut! I wouldn't cause you pain
For your—er—fault.

FANNY BURNEY
(*with emotion*)

Uncle, if you could dream
All that it meant to me, the thrill—the gleam—
You'll never guess what dull hours I've beguiled.

RICHARD BURNEY
(*patronizingly*)

There! There! Remember you're my niece, dear child.
One mustn't be too hard on what's one's own.

FANNY BURNEY
(*with quick gratitude*)

Oh, *Uncle!*

RICHARD BURNEY
(*condescendingly*)

If you want to be alone
Sometimes, and write, I've no objection—none.

FANNY BURNEY
(*radiant*)

Uncle!

RICHARD BURNEY
(*to himself*)

And when I think how quick it's done—
Just write a book, and make two hundred pounds!
(CEPHAS *appears at door right, an old man in snuff-colored livery. He carries a candle, and an iron ring with some large keys on it.*)

CEPHAS

Miss Fanny—

FANNY BURNEY
(*to her uncle*)

Cephas wants to make his rounds
And lock the doors.

RICHARD BURNEY

Then, child, good night.

(FANNY *takes a candle from the table. Motions to* CEPHAS *to go. He exits, right, and* FANNY *drops a curtsey to her uncle.*)

FANNY BURNEY

Good night.

RICHARD BURNEY
(*intercepting her*)

You think that you might write some more as bright
As "Evelina"?

FANNY BURNEY
(*modestly*)

I can try.

RICHARD BURNEY
Yes, do.

(*Again* FANNY *fetches him a dutiful curtsey. He smiles at her benignly between puffs of smoke as he stands with his back to the fire. Exit* FANNY, *right, with her candle.* RICHARD BURNEY *puffs complacently, yet with the air of a man who must speak aloud in order to give vent to his feelings. His sentences come between enjoyable whiffs.*)

RICHARD BURNEY

Well, even if the hussy's socks *are* blue,
She's my own niece. One shouldn't be repining
To find blue stockings have a silver lining.
The little baggage! Lord! Two hundred pounds!
Well, Charles can spend it fixing up his grounds!

CURTAIN

THE TURTLE DOVE

A Chinese Play

BY

MARGARET SCOTT OLIVER

CHARACTERS

CHORUS.

CHANG-SUT-YEN, son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, ruler of the Province of Canton.

THE MANDARIN.

KWEN-LIN, his daughter

THE GOD OF FATE.

THE PROPERTY MAN.

THE GONG-BEARER.

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THE TURTLE DOVE

The play is acted in the Chinese manner, without stage setting. The back drop is painted to represent a Willow plate. CHORUS *is present at the left side of the stage throughout the action, to explain the story, announce the characters as they appear, and thank the audience for its interest. The* PROPERTY MAN, *in a black costume, remains at the back of the stage. At various specified times, he hands the necessary properties to the several characters, from a small box beside him. When not occupied with stage work, he spends the time reading a Chinese paper.*

All the persons in the play are in blue and white costumes, to make the plate picture. The GONG-BEARER *may be in royal yellow and* CHORUS *in emerald green.*

SCENE I

The curtain is drawn slightly open, and the GONG-BEARER *appears, strikes the gong three times very slowly and ten times rapidly, then walks to the right side of the stage, and stands there throughout the play.* CHORUS *appears between the parted curtains, holds up his left hand while the* GONG-BEARER *strikes once, then addresses the audience in a very suave manner.*

CHORUS. Most illustrious friends, I deliver the three bows to Heaven, Earth, and Man, (*Bows ceremoniously*

to right, left, and center.) and obtrude myself on your exalted vision that you may know the meaning of our poor play. The story deals with the always new love of youth for maid, the abrupt tempering of a father's wrath to forgiveness, and the immutability of Fate.

Our hero, Chang-sut-yen,

(CHANG-SUT-YEN *appears between the curtains, bows to right, left, and center, then disappears behind the curtains.*) will come before you as a servant, but in reality he is none other than the son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, ruler of this Province of Canton.

(GONG-BEARER *strikes the gong.*)

The God of Fate decreed that he should be known as a turtle dove, and have his image forever emblazoned on the shining surface of a Willow plate. To avert this calamitous ending to his august life, Chang-sut-yen has fled the home of his father, and entered the service of a rich and powerful Mandarin, where he hopes, by virtue of his obscure position, to escape the notice of the God. But, as we have said, Fate is immutable, what the God plans must ever be, despite the efforts of puny man.

You will see the Mandarin,

(MANDARIN *appears, bows, and disappears.*)

rich, proud, majestic, with eyes for everything that may tend to make him more powerful, but superbly blind to virtue and worth in the humble.

Kwen-lin, his daughter,

(KWEN-LIN *appears, bows, and retires.*)

is swayed by love alone; a dangerous practice usually, but in this story, one begging your approval. Do not

judge her harshly, in that her heart leads her. Remember she is a woman. Much may be forgiven women.

(*The* PROPERTY MAN *appears, bows, and looks inquiringly at* CHORUS, *who hesitates an instant, and then, as if fulfilling a rather unpleasant duty, proceeds.*)

I would I might ignore the Property Man. He composed a version of this poetic tale, putting in all the ugly truths, and serenely forgetting all the possible flower-like episodes. As artists we could not consider it.

(PROPERTY MAN *with a slight shrug leaves stage.*)

The Property Man is not sufficiently large minded to accept our ripe and impartial opinion. He is superbly indifferent to the luminous fruit from his successful rival's quill, and will probably sulk through his duties. That you may not be disturbed by his presence, we have clothed him invisibly in black, and you will therefore be spared the pain of seeing him at all.

I fear I have kept you all too long from the feast prepared for your delectation. If my brothers behind the curtain show not that histrionic merit you so rightly demand, I pray you be lenient, and listen with ears, and see with eyes, not too critical. I conduct you at once to the moonlit garden of the wealthy Mandarin, where Chang-sut-yen is loitering, hoping to meet there the Mandarin's beautiful daughter, Kwen-lin, who smiles on him. Is it not traditionally the fashion of women to adore most that youth who is forbidden?

I bow to you for your attentively honorable ears. I bow. I bow.

(GONG-BEARER *strikes gong.* CHORUS *walks to left of*

stage, and curtains are pulled apart, revealing CHANG-SUT-YEN *standing before the back drop.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*singing*). Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy. Kwen-lin will know that song. It is nothing, it says nothing, therefore it is pregnant with meaning, and my Bright Water-Lily will understand. (*Singing.*) Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy. She will come, dancing like sun-rays on the flowers of my mind, and I will press my honorable lips to hers, and our solemn breaths will mingle. Though I seem but a servant, I am Chang-sut-yen, son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, ruler of this province. (GONG-BEARER *strikes gong.*) I am also the most glorious lover the Gods have made. My soul was fashioned from the wind of Heaven, and the purple fire of the mountain peak. My illustrious body is the sturdy tree to which maidens will ever sigh their timid love.

CHORUS. It is the Mandarin who walks this way.

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*singing*). Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy,—who comes? Alas, not Kwen-lin the fragrant, but my master. He will spit anger that I linger in the garden. I must summon my snake tongue to puzzle his cow brain, lest he suspect I wait for her. I will divest myself of my honorable senses, and speak with an empty head. I will be gloriously fool possessed. (*Singing.*) Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.

(*Enter* MANDARIN.)

MANDARIN. The night is full of chill. If the God

of Frost bites his sharp teeth into my fruit trees, they will perish. Br-r-r, cold!

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*clasping* MANDARIN *in his arms*). August one, the white moon lady slumbers in the chamber of Heaven, while I wait for you to light the path of my dreams.

MANDARIN. Ancestors, save me!

CHANG-SUT-YEN. We will make loud prayers to the tablets of our magnificently worthy ancestors after we embrace. Let me pluck you, and wear you across my heart, before your flower beauty fades.

MANDARIN (*recognizing him*). Miserable three-footed dog, what maiden did you think to greet?

CHANG-SUT-YEN. I press to my superb breast only your lily feet, honorable Cherry Blossom.

MANDARIN. I am no Cherry Blossom.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. You are all the Cherry Blossoms in the Garden of Earth, shedding perfume and petals with every sighing breeze.

MANDARIN. I shed nothing but the light of Truth and Justice.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. My heart cracks with love for you and your tasks. At night when sleep seals the minds of other servants, I journey forth to count again your dazzling possessions. Your peach trees bend before me, and I am blinded. I beg to work for you until Death sews a black seam in my brain, and I go to my ancestors.

MANDARIN. You have departed your unhappy wits. I give you tomorrow to offer gifts to the Gods. Pursue

sleep, and think not of my possessions, but rather of your venerable poverty. Your august brain is not large enough for Death to waste thread on. Thread is costly. Away with you, and rest.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. May your golden finger nails grow, and grow, and grow, until they grasp all wealth and honor. (*Singing.*) Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.

(*Exit* CHANG, *singing.*)

MANDARIN. He is a faithful dog, who begs but a kick to make him lick my hand. I have given him too many tasks. He is bereft of his toad mind. I dislike a man who sings as he works. Life does not plan it so.

CHORUS. Kwen-lin, Bright Water-Lily, comes to meet her lover.

(*Enter* KWEN-LIN *singing.* PROPERTY MAN *hands her a branch of blossoms.*)

KWEN-LIN (*singing*). Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo, chin lo, bor lo un doy.

MANDARIN. The mad one croaked that. (*Turns back and sings.*) Bor lo un doy, bor lo un doy, chin lo,—

KWEN-LIN (*clasping him*). Supreme lover! The happy breezes dance when your voice is the lute.

MANDARIN. My important ears to be so assailed! The world box collapses and tumbles round me.

KWEN-LIN. Noble father! I thought it was my—

MANDARIN. Your?

KWEN-LIN. My Singing Bird.

MANDARIN. A Cherry Blossom, and a Singing Bird! An illustrious choice for a man of high position.

KWEN-LIN. You sound very like a singing bird.

MANDARIN. Something has broken in their heads. Spring has tangled the brain threads. It must be Spring!

KWEN-LIN. It is Spring, and soon it will be superb Summer, then Fall, then Winter. The year gone pff! like that, and miserable life flower desolated.

MANDARIN. Before the honorable year goes pff! like that, you will be an exalted wife.

KWEN-LIN. A wife! I, a wife?

MANDARIN. For seventeen years of moons, your nurses and teachers have polished you into a state of passable excellence. You are very wonderful as foolish little girls go. You are something of a somebody.

KWEN-LIN. But to what impressive man are my charms to be presented?

MANDARIN (*looking at invisible garden*). This late frost will surely steal the jewels in my garden. The servant Chang must cover the iris. I can trust Chang.

KWEN-LIN. You marry me to Chang-sut-yen?

MANDARIN. Do I throw my child of five thousand and one delectable graces into the arms of a servant? I was speaking of my garden.

KWEN-LIN. If I am to wed, let us speak of husbands.

MANDARIN. Ah, many men have sought to wed you, but I have turned their eyes away, until the sublime one should ask.

KWEN-LIN. To whom do I go?

MANDARIN. To the greatest of all! To be dazzled,

to be petted, to be surrounded by every superior luxury.

KWEN-LIN (*impatiently*). To whom do I go?

MANDARIN. There is honor and eminence the alliance will give me, and money it will add to my already considerable store. We will not, as a matter of policy, show we are flattered. We will be proud, we will be haughty, we will drive a shrewd bargain when the wealthy Ta-yin of Canton would make you his bride.

KWEN-LIN. The Ta-yin of Canton! I will not marry the Ta-yin of Canton!

MANDARIN. What strange words do your lips produce? Does my daughter oppose her insect mind to mine?

KWEN-LIN. I will not marry the Ta-yin of Canton. He's ugly, he's bold, he's yellow as—

MANDARIN. Gold!

KWEN-LIN. He shakes when he walks—

MANDARIN. He's a—

KWEN-LIN. Hundred years old! My heart would crack with grief were I to marry him.

MANDARIN. I never yet heard that any maiden died of grief at the prospect of being a bride.

KWEN-LIN. Br-r-r-r!

MANDARIN (*jumping*). What was that?

KWEN-LIN. My heart cracking. Death is clutching for me.

MANDARIN (*wearily*). Go away, Death. Take her, if you must, after she is wed. The wealthy Ta-yin can better bear the sad expenses.

KWEN-LIN. I'm dying now, dying, dying. It's quite delicious! (*Lies down.* PROPERTY MAN *puts a blue cushion under her head.*) I'm almost dead!

MANDARIN. You can't die like this. It's most absurd, besides being unbeautiful.

KWEN-LIN. Have no fear, my death will be magnificently beautiful. I have practiced many times, and know.

MANDARIN. Get up, fox soul!

KWEN-LIN (*sitting up*). Have respect for my solemnly departing life. My heart will not throb longer. (*Lies down.*) I am dead!

MANDARIN (*prodding her with foot*). Get up, get up, get up! I must carry her! (*Stoops and puts arms under* KWEN-LIN.) Oh, for the strong muscles of my lusty young arms. We have fed her too well. She weighs many pounds. (*Stands up and claps hands.* CHANG-SUT-YEN *enters.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN. My serene mind presents itself to you, great master.

MANDARIN. Sleep should be gathering up the ends of your serene mind, but it is as well. My daughter's honorable body has persuaded itself to seek its illustrious ancestors—

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*kneeling beside* KWEN-LIN). Kwen-lin dead, dead! Then let the lady moon fall from the mighty loft of Heaven, and burn my life to ashes of wistaria!

MANDARIN. Your overwhelming grief at my bereavement becomes a servant, but let not the pockets of your

eyes fill with tears. Bear her to the house. She shall be whipped alive— (KWEN-LIN *shudders.*) The sublime wasp shakes at that?

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*bending over* KWEN-LIN, *and looking into her wide open eyes*). It was a death throe, exalted one.

MANDARIN. Can your arms support her?

CHANG-SUT-YEN. I lift a Cherry Blossom with more effort.

MANDARIN. Speak not of Cherry Blossoms. Pick her up. (CHANG *starts to lift* KWEN-LIN.) No, no, that is not wise. How shall we do it?

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*craftily*). I can guard the crystal vase of her departed soul, while you go for help.

MANDARIN. It had not penetrated my disturbed brain. I go for help. (*Exit* MANDARIN.)

KWEN-LIN (*sitting up*). Superb love mate!

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*hurriedly*). Augustly enter the world of the venerable dead again, luscious one, your honorable father looks this way.

KWEN-LIN (*lying down*). Do your eyes grow pearls that I am with my ancestors?

CHANG-SUT-YEN. The love butterflies are winging in the happy recesses of my heart. My breath will smother me with joy.

KWEN-LIN (*sitting up*). Joy, when my father is going to marry me to the Ta-yin of Canton?

CHANG-SUT-YEN. Exalted joy, because before that can happen my father will have the Ta-yin beheaded.

KWEN-LIN. An orphan has no father.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. I have a celestial now and then father, who does these necessary but disagreeable things. I think he will dispose of the wealthy Ta-yin if I ask him.

KWEN-LIN. It must be a wonderful convenience. We will make a list of all those superbly annoying persons we do not like, and have your celestial now and then father behead them.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. We will ponder it, Bright Water-Lily, when we are not serenely happy.

KWEN-LIN. I do not like being whipped alive! My teeth chatter when I think of it, and I can't be happy.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. A base whip to touch you! Nay, my lips shall make you live. (*Kisses her.*) I am gloriously versed in lip magic. (*Kisses her again.*)

KWEN-LIN. Let us fly on our illustrious legs, and be married with the six ceremonies, before my father returns. I like that lip magic. It makes singing here.

(KWEN-LIN *touches heart. She and* CHANG-SUT-YEN *exeunt. The* PROPERTY MAN *looks around the stage slowly, glances in the property box, then saunters casually off.*)

CURTAIN

CHORUS. I bow.

(CHORUS *leaves stage followed by* GONG-BEARER.)

Scene II

(Chorus *again appears before the closed curtains, and raises his left hand, while the* Gong-Bearer, *who has walked to his original position at the right side of the stage, strikes the gong once.*)

Chorus. Many perfumed months have passed since Chang-sut-yen wedded Kwen-lin, and each has added a white hibiscus blossom to the garland of life. But now bitter winter comes, snow is on the peony hill, the hosts of evil are abroad. The Mandarin, with never-ending rage, has spent the months searching throughout the Empire to discover their dwelling place. Now he has learned where it is, and pursues Chang-sut-yen with a death-dealing thong, which he will wield with dire results. It is the pleasure of the illustrious author that the villain act in a supremely unpleasant manner, in order to bring out the tenderness of the play. Our lovers, not knowing this is a comedy (and therefore must conclude with smiles and feasting), are overwhelmed with fear. I beg you not to share this fear, except inasmuch as it may make the after enjoyment of the happy ending more piquant and superbly satisfying.

I bow to you and conduct you to the home of Chang-sut-yen and Kwen-lin, his wife.

(Gong-Bearer *strikes gong.* Chorus *walks to his place at the left of stage. The curtains are drawn apart and reveal* Chang-sut-yen *and* Kwen-lin. *The* Property Man *is at the back of the stage, as before.*)

KWEN-LIN. Is my august father yet stamping on the road? Peep out of the door, heroic one, and show but part of one eye, lest the radiance from both light the world like stars, and he swoop upon us.

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*looking out of imaginary doorway*). I see not his angry body.

KWEN-LIN. I would not face him here. Let us go outside and sit neath the eaves of the pagoda. He may miss our presence and leave without shattering this temple of our love dreams.

(PROPERTY MAN *opens invisible door, they descend two steps and sit down, and* PROPERTY MAN *closes the door.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN. Little humming bird, your heart wings beat wildly against my solemn breast.

KWEN-LIN. His fiery breath will wither our blood. Feel how it scorches the gray veil of night. He is coming to consume us, he is coming to consume us! I fear his terrible rage.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. Nay, tremble not, for I, your lover, shelter you in my heart.

CHORUS. The Mandarin comes.

KWEN-LIN (*sadly*). The wine cup is drained, the love songs all are silenced.

(*Enter* MANDARIN.)

MANDARIN. Base thief and destroyer, at last I have found the hole in which you hide!

CHANG-SUT-YEN. A lover seeks only food for his love. If he destroys or thieves, what matter? Love is first.

MANDARIN. My tongue sends flame into your viper soul. Go to your ancestors, they beckon you.

KWEN-LIN. Let us escape across the bridge!

(PROPERTY MAN *holds bamboo stick horizontally for bridge.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN. Why should we flee?

KWEN-LIN. Why should we perish? To the bridge! We will outrun him.

(*They run on to bridge.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*grasping bamboo*). The bridge shakes. Its ribs are rotten. We will fall into the water.

KWEN-LIN (*off stage*). I fall, I drown!

CHANG-SUT YEN. Bright Water-Lily, float upon the water's face.

MANDARIN. I pull down your star from Heaven's dome.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. My star dropped to Earth, when the light of hers failed.

(PROPERTY MAN *hands whip to* MANDARIN.)

MANDARIN. I strike with my exalted whip. By the God of Fate, you die!

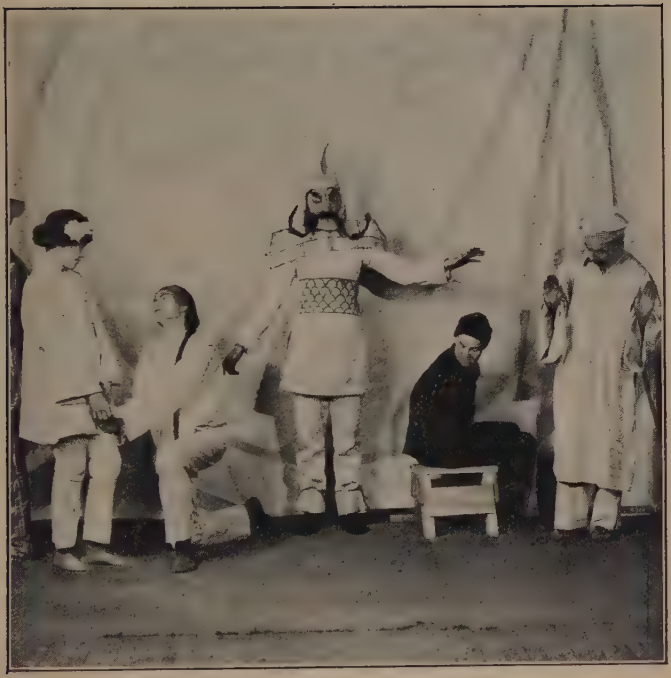
(*Strikes* CHANG *with whip.* CHANG *falls.* GONG-BEARER *strikes gong. The* GOD OF FATE, *wearing grotesque mask, enters.*)

FATE. Who calls me to the world of men?

MANDARIN. What unknown fear are you?

FATE. I am the God of Fate.

MANDARIN. I have sent a dog to death. (*Stoops and takes a small red bag from* CHANG'S *breast.*)



THE GOD OF FATE RECALLS KWEN-LIN TO LIFE

From a production of "The Turtle Dove," given by the Dramatic Club of the Horace Mann School for Boys.

FATE. Chang-sut-yen is mine! He must not die.

MANDARIN. My exulting mind does not record your meaning.

FATE (*stooping over* CHANG *and putting the red bag back*). Chang-sut-yen, son of Chang-won-yin, the Great, I give you back your heart! (GONG-BEARER *strikes gong.*)

MANDARIN. Chang-sut-yen, son of Heaven! I bow in the dust three times. (*Prostrates himself.*)

FATE (*to* CHANG). Arise, and continue your exalted life.

CHANG-SUT-YEN (*rising*). My path is lost in crookedness until I join her. Let me go.

FATE. The Gods have not yet dried the ink on the pages of your book of life. You must live, to live upon a Willow plate.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. And be broken by the heavy hand of august Time and unkind Chance. (PROPERTY MAN *hands knife to* CHANG.) With this frosty blade, I cut the circle of life and press my lips to the jade cup of nothingness. I am a lover bereft of my mate.

FATE. You must live! (*Touches* CHANG'S *arm with staff. The knife falls to the ground.* PROPERTY MAN *picks it up and puts it back in the property box.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN. Kwen-lin, I leap across the river of Heaven to your arms!

FATE. She is not dead. She dreams and smiles upon the bosom of the water. (*To* KWEN-LIN.) Awake! Awake!

(KWEN-LIN *enters and goes to* CHANG.)

FATE. Your sublime father, Chang-won-yin, has gone to his ancestors. You are Chang-sut-yen, the Great, ruler of this province.

(GONG-BEARER *strikes gong.*)

CHANG-SUT-YEN. I renounce my rule. I am a lover, not a ruler.

FATE. You are a turtle dove. (*To* MANDARIN.) To your home, and set forth majestic feasting. Chang-sut-yen will honor your house. He rules.

CHANG-SUT-YEN. I rule not. I am a lover.

KWEN-LIN. Exalted one, a lover is a turtle dove.

FATE. It is sometimes given to women to know the truth. Thus Fate is fulfilled, and Chang-sut-yen, the turtle dove, will live upon a Willow plate.

(GONG-BEARER *strikes the gong twice.*)

CURTAIN

CHORUS. For your eager ears, for your shining eyes, for your smiling faces, I bow, I bow, I bow.

(CHORUS, *followed by the* GONG-BEARER, *goes behind the curtains.*)

THE ROMANCERS

BY

EDMOND ROSTAND

(Translated by Barrett H. Clark)

THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

SYLVETTE.
PERCINET.
STRAFOREL.
BERGAMIN, Percinet's father.
PASQUINOT, Sylvette's father.
Swordsmen, musicians, negroes, and torch-bearers.

The action takes place anywhere, provided the costumes are pretty.

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THE ROMANCERS

The stage is divided by an old wall, covered with vines and flowers. At the right, a corner of BERGAMIN'S *private park; at the left, a corner of* PASQUINOT'S. *On each side of the wall, and against it, is a rustic bench.*

As the curtain rises, PERCINET *is seated on the top of the wall. On his knee is a book, out of which he is reading to* SYLVETTE, *who stands attentively listening on the bench which is on the other side of the wall.*

SYLVETTE. Monsieur Percinet, how divinely beautiful!

PERCINET. Is it not? Listen to what Romeo answers: (*Reading.*)

> "It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
> No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
> Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.
> Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops:
> I must be gone" ——

SYLVETTE (*interrupts him, as she listens*). Sh!

PERCINET (*listens a moment, then*). No one! And, Mademoiselle, you must not take fright like a startled bird. Hear the immortal lovers:

"*Juliet.* Yon light is not daylight, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

Romeo. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou will have it so.
I'll say, yon gray is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome" ——

SYLVETTE. No, he must not say such things, or I shall cry.

PERCINET. Then let us stop and read no further until tomorrow. We shall let Romeo live! (*He closes the book and looks about him.*) This charming spot seems expressly made, it seems to me, to cradle the words of the Divine Will!

SYLVETTE. The verses are divine, and the soft air here is a divine accompaniment. And see, these green shades! But, Monsieur Percinet, what makes them divine to me is the way you read!

PERCINET. Flatterer!

SYLVETTE (*sighing*). Poor lovers! Their fate was cruel! (*Another sigh.*) I think—

PERCINET. What?

SYLVETTE. Nothing!

PERCINET. Something that made you blush red as a rose.

SYLVETTE. Nothing, I say.

PERCINET. Ah, that's too transparent. I see it all: you are thinking of our fathers!

SYLVETTE. Perhaps—

PERCINET. Of their terrible hatred for each other.

SYLVETTE. The thought often pains me and makes me cry when I am alone. Last month, when I came home from the convent, my father pointed out your father's park, and said to me: "My dear child, you behold there the domain of my mortal enemy, Bergamin. Never cross the path of those two rascals, Bergamin and his son Percinet. Mark well my words, and obey me to the letter, or I shall cast you off as an enemy. Their family has always been at bitter enmity with our own." And I promised. But you see how I keep my word!

PERCINET. Did I not promise my father to do the same, Sylvette? Yet I love you!

SYLVETTE. Holy saints!

PERCINET. I love you, my dearest!

SYLVETTE. It's sinful!

PERCINET. Very—but what can we do? The greater the obstacles to be overcome, the sweeter the reward. Sylvette, kiss me!

SYLVETTE. Never! (*She jumps down from the bench and runs off a few steps.*)

PERCINET. But you love me?

SYLVETTE. What?

PERCINET. My dear child: I, too, sometimes think

of us and compare you and me with those other lovers—of Verona.

SYLVETTE. But *I* didn't compare—!

PERCINET. You and I are Juliet and Romeo; I love you to despair, and I shall brave the wrath of Pasquinot-Capulet and Bergamin-Montague!

SYLVETTE (*coming a little nearer to the wall*). Then we love? But how, Monsieur Percinet, has it happened so soon?

PERCINET. Love is born we know not how, because it must be born. I often saw you pass my window—

SYLVETTE. I saw you, too!

PERCINET. And our eyes spoke in silence.

SYLVETTE. One day I was gathering nuts in the garden by the wall—

PERCINET. One day I happened to be reading Shakespeare. See how everything conspired to unite two hearts!

SYLVETTE. And a little gust of wind blew my scarf in your direction.

PERCINET. I climbed to the wall to return it—

SYLVETTE (*climbing the wall again*). I climbed too!

PERCINET. And since that day, my dear, I have waited at the same hour, here by this wall; and each time my heart beat louder and faster, until I knew by your soft laugh that you were near!

SYLVETTE. Now since we love, we must be married.

PERCINET. I was just thinking about that.

SYLVETTE (*solemnly*). I, last of the Pasquinots, do solemnly pledge myself to you, last of the Bergamins.

PERCINET. What noble recklessness!

SYLVETTE. We shall be sung in future ages!

PERCINET. Two tender children of too hardhearted fathers!

SYLVETTE. But who knows whether the hour is not at hand when our fathers' hatred may end?

PERCINET. I doubt it.

SYLVETTE. I have heard of stranger things. I can think of half a dozen—

PERCINET. What, for instance?

SYLVETTE. Imagine that the reigning prince comes riding past some day—I run to him and kneel, and tell him the story of our love and of our fathers' hatred. The prince asks to see my father and Bergamin, and they are reconciled.

PERCINET. And your father gives me your hand!

SYLVETTE. Yes. Or else, you languish, the doctor declares you cannot live—

PERCINET. And asks: "What ails you?"

SYLVETTE. And you answer: "I must have Sylvette!"

PERCINET. And his pride is then forced to bend.

SYLVETTE. Yes. Or else, an aged duke, having seen my portrait, falls in love with me, sends a 'squire to sue for my hand, and offers to make me a duchess.

PERCINET. And you say, "No!"

SYLVETTE. He is offended, and some dark night when I am in the garden, meditating, he springs forth out of the darkness! I scream!

PERCINET. And I lose not a second in springing over the wall, dagger in hand. I fight like a tiger, I—

SYLVETTE. You lay low three or four men. Then my father rushes in and takes me in his arms. You tell him who you are. His heart softens, he gives me to my savior. Your father consents, for he is proud of your bravery.

PERCINET. Then we live together for years, happy and content!

SYLVETTE. This is not at all impossible, is it?

PERCINET. Someone's coming!

SYLVETTE (*forgetting herself*). Kiss me!

PERCINET (*kissing her*). This evening, at eight, then? As usual? You will come?

SYLVETTE. No.

PERCINET. Yes!

SYLVETTE (*disappearing behind the wall*). Your father! (PERCINET *jumps quickly from the wall.*)

(*Enter* BERGAMIN.)

BERGAMIN. Ah, ha, I find you here again, dreaming in this corner of the park!

PERCINET. Father, I love this old corner! I adore this bench over which the vines of the wall have so gracefully draped themselves. See, what graceful arabesques these festoons make! The air is purer here.

BERGAMIN. By the side of this wall?

PERCINET. I love it!

BERGAMIN. I see nothing lovable about it!

SYLVETTE (*aside*). He can't see why!

PERCINET. But it is charming, all covered with ivy

and creeper. See here, what honeysuckle! This hundred-year-old wall, with its clinging vines, its constellations of flowers, looking through the crannies, kissed by the summer sun, makes the bench a throne fit for kings!

BERGAMIN. Nonsense, you hare-brained youth! Do you mean to tell me that this wall has eyes?

PERCINET. Ah, what eyes! (*Turns toward the wall.*) Of soft azure, yet dazzlingly blue; let but a tear come to dim your brightness, or a single kiss—

BERGAMIN. But the wall hasn't eyes, you idiot!

PERCINET. See this vine, though! (*He plucks part of the vine from the wall and graciously presents it to his father.*)

SYLVETTE (*aside*). How clever!

BERGAMIN. How stupid! But I know now what has turned your silly head: you come here to read! (SYLVETTE *starts as she hears this.* PERCINET *also shows signs of fear as his father pulls the book from the youth's pocket.*) Plays! (*He drops the book in horror.*) And verse! Verse! That's what has turned your head. Now I see why you talk about eyes and honeysuckle. I tell you, to be useful, a wall doesn't have to be beautiful. I am going to have all this green stuff taken away, and the bricks re-laid and the holes stopped up. I want a white wall and a high one to keep the neighbors from looking into our park. I want no vines and honeysuckles. Along the top I'll sprinkle broken glass—

PERCINET. Pity!

BERGAMIN. No pity! I insist on it! Glass—all

along the top of the wall! (SYLVETTE *and* PERCINET *are in despair.* BERGAMIN *sits down on the bench.*) And now, I have something to say to you. (*He rises and examines the wall.*) If the wall hasn't eyes, it may possibly have ears? (*He is about to stand on the bench, when* PERCINET *takes fright and* SYLVETTE *clings close to her side of the wall, making herself as small as she can.* BERGAMIN *decides not to scale the wall, but motions to his son to do so.*) See whether some curious listener—?

PERCINET (*climbing to the top and leaning over so that* SYLVETTE *can hear him*). Till tonight!

SYLVETTE (*giving him her hand, which he kisses*). I'll come as the clock is striking! I adore you!

BERGAMIN (*to* PERCINET). Well?

PERCINET (*jumping down—to his father*). No one!

BERGAMIN (*re-seating himself*). Well, then, my boy, I should like to see you married.

SYLVETTE (*aside*). Oh!

BERGAMIN. What's that?

PERCINET. Nothing.

BERGAMIN. I thought I heard a cry?

PERCINET (*looking into the air*). Some wounded bird, perhaps.

BERGAMIN. I have given the matter my undivided attention, and have chosen a wife for you. (PERCINET *whistles and walks away.*) I tell you, I am in earnest and I intend to force you, if necessary. (PERCINET *continues whistling.*) *Will* you stop that confounded whistling! The young woman is rich—she's a jewel!

PERCINET. I want none of your jewels!

BERGAMIN. I'll show you, you young insolent!

PERCINET (*grasping his father's cane, which is raised as if to strike him*). Spring has filled the bushes with the songs of birds; the brooklets accompany the love-notes of wild birds.

BERGAMIN. Rascal!

PERCINET (*still holding the cane*). The whole world laughs and sings farewell to April. The butterflies—

BERGAMIN. Ruffian!

PERCINET (*as before*). Wing their way across the meadows, to make love to the adored flowers! Love—

BERGAMIN. Villain!

PERCINET. Love opens wide the heart of all nature. And you ask me to consent to a marriage of reason!

BERGAMIN. Of course I do!

PERCINET (*passionately*). No, no, no, Father. I swear by this wall—which hears me, I hope—that my marriage will be more romantic than any dreamed of in the most poetic of the world's love stories! (*He runs out.*)

BERGAMIN (*pursuing him*). Ah, let me catch you—!

SYLVETTE. I can really understand now why Papa hates that odious old man!

(*Enter* PASQUINOT, *left.*)

PASQUINOT. Well, Mademoiselle, what are you doing here?

SYLVETTE. Nothing. Taking the air.

PASQUINOT. Alone? But, you silly girl, are you not afraid?

SYLVETTE. Not in the least.

PASQUINOT. Near this wall? I forbade you to come near it! You see that park over there? That belongs to my mortal enemy!

SYLVETTE. I know it, Father dear.

PASQUINOT. Why, here you are exposed to any insult, any—if those rascals knew that my daughter were walking alone in the park—Brr! It makes me shiver to think of! I'm going to have the wall repaired, and erect a huge iron grill on top of it.

SYLVETTE (*aside*). He'll never do it—it would cost too much!

PASQUINOT. Now go into the house—quick! (*She goes out,* PASQUINOT *glowering at her.*)

BERGAMIN (*heard from the other side of the wall as he enters*). Take this note at once to Monsieur Straforel.

PASQUINOT (*running to the wall and climbing to the top of it*). Bergamin!

BERGAMIN (*doing likewise*). Pasquinot! (*They embrace.*)

PASQUINOT. How are you?

BERGAMIN. Pretty well.

PASQUINOT. How's your gout?

BERGAMIN. Better. And how is your cold?

PASQUINOT. Still troubles me, devil take it!

BERGAMIN. Well, the marriage is arranged!

PASQUINOT. What?

BERGAMIN. I heard everything—I was hidden in the bushes. They adore each other!

PASQUINOT. Bravo!

BERGAMIN. We must bring matters to a head!

(*He rubs his hands.*) Ha, ha! Now we can do as we had planned—

PASQUINOT. Yes, and tear down the wall.

BERGAMIN. And live together.

PASQUINOT. Joining our properties.

BERGAMIN. By marrying our children. But I wonder whether they would be so anxious if they knew we wished it? A marriage arranged beforehand is not so tempting to two young children so romantic as ours. That is why we kept our own wishes a secret. I felt sure that after they had been separated—Sylvette in the convent, Percinet at school—they would thrive on their secret love. That is how I came to invent this hatred of ours. And you even doubted its success! Now all we have to do is to say, Yes.

PASQUINOT. But how can it be done? Remember, I've called you a scoundrel, fool, idiot—

BERGAMIN. Idiot? Scoundrel was sufficient.

PASQUINOT. Now, what pretext—?

BERGAMIN. Your daughter herself has given me an inspiration. This evening they are to meet here at eight. Percinet comes first. At the moment Sylvette appears, mysterious men in black will emerge from the shadows and start to carry her off. An abduction! She screams, then our young hero gives chase, draws his sword—the ravishers pretend to flee—I arrive on the scene, then you—your daughter is safe and sound. You bless the couple and drop a few appropriate tears; my heart is softened. Tableau.

PASQUINOT. A stroke of genius.

BERGAMIN (*modestly*). Yes—I think it really is. Look—see that man coming? It's Straforel, the bravado whom I wrote to a few minutes ago. He is to superintend the abduction.

(STRAFOREL, *in an elaborate swordsman's costume, appears at the back of* BERGAMIN'S *park, and swaggers down stage.*)

BERGAMIN (*descending from the wall and bowing low to* STRAFOREL). Allow me to introduce you to my friend Pasquinot.

STRAFOREL (*bowing*). Monsieur! (*He raises his head and sees no* PASQUINOT.)

BERGAMIN (*pointing to* PASQUINOT *on the crest of the wall*). There, on the wall!—Now, my dear master, does my plan meet with your approval?

STRAFOREL. It does. It is most simple.

BERGAMIN. You must act quickly, you understand?

STRAFOREL. And say nothing!

BERGAMIN. A make-believe abduction and stage-fight with swords.

STRAFOREL. I understand perfectly.

BERGAMIN. You must have skillful swordsmen —I can't have my boy hurt. He is my only child!

STRAFOREL. I will see to that myself.

BERGAMIN. Good. In that case, I shall fear nothing.

PASQUINOT (*aside to* BERGAMIN). Ask him the price?

BERGAMIN. For an abduction, Maestro, how much do you charge?

STRAFOREL. That depends, Monsieur, on the kind you wish; we have them at all prices. In an affair of this kind, however, nothing should be spared. If I were in your place, I should have a first-class abduction.

BERGAMIN (*surprised*). Then you have many classes?

STRAFOREL. Indeed I have. I have the ordinary vulgar abduction in a cab, with two men dressed in black—that's rarely used; the daylight abduction, the midnight abduction; the pompous abduction in a court carriage, with powdered servants—wigs are extra—with mutes, negroes, brigands, musketeers, anything you like! The abduction in a post-chaise, with two, three, four, five, horses, ad lib.; the discreet and quiet abduction, in a small carriage—that one's rather lugubrious; the rollicking abduction, in which the victim is carried away in a sack; the romantic abduction in a boat—but a lake is necessary!—the Venetian abduction, in a gondola—ah, you have no lagoon! Moonlight abduction, or the abduction on a dark and starless night—those moonlight abductions are quite the style, though they are a little dear!—Besides these, there is the abduction by torch-light, with cries and screams, and clash and shock of arms; the brutal abduction, the polite abduction; the classical one with masks; the gallant abduction to the accompaniment of music; but the latest, most stylish, gayest of all, is the sedan-chair abduction!

BERGAMIN (*scratching his head—aside to* PASQUINOT). Well, what do you think?

PASQUINOT. Hm, what do you?

BERGAMIN. I think that we should do everything in the best possible way, no expense spared. Let us give our young romancers something they'll not soon forget. Let's have it with masks, dark mantles, torches, music, and a sedan-chair!

STRAFOREL (*taking notes*). A first-class, then, with all extras.

BERGAMIN. That's it.

STRAFOREL. I shall return soon. (*To* PASQUINOT.) Remember, Monsieur, to leave open the door of your park tonight.

BERGAMIN. Very well, it shall be done.

STRAFOREL (*bowing*). My compliments. (*Turning to go.*) One first-class—with extras. (*He goes out.*)

PASQUINOT. The honest man, he went without telling us the price!

BERGAMIN. Everything is arranged. Now we'll live together, after demolishing the wall.

PASQUINOT. And in winter we'll have but one hearth and home!

BERGAMIN. Our dearest wishes are about to be realized!

PASQUINOT. And we'll grow old together!

BERGAMIN. Dear old Pasquinot!

PASQUINOT. Dear old Bergamin! (*They embrace.* SYLVETTE *and* PERCINET *enter, from each side of the stage, and see their fathers embrace.*)

SYLVETTE. Oh!

BERGAMIN (*aside to* PASQUINOT). Your daughter!

PERCINET. Oh!

PASQUINOT (*aside to* BERGAMIN). Your son!

BERGAMIN (*aside to* PASQUINOT). We must pretend to fight! (*Their embrace is transformed into a struggle.*) Rascal!

PASQUINOT. Fool!

SYLVETTE (*pulling her father's coat-tails*). Papa!

PERCINET (*doing the same with his father*). Papa!

BERGAMIN. Let us be!

PASQUINOT. He insulted me!

BERGAMIN. He struck me!

PASQUINOT. Coward!

SYLVETTE. Papa!

BERGAMIN. Thief!

PERCINET. Papa!

PASQUINOT. Bandit!

SYLVETTE. Papa!! (SYLVETTE *and* PERCINET *finally succeed in separating the fathers.*)

PERCINET (*dragging his father away*). Go in now, it's late.

BERGAMIN (*trying to go to the wall again*). I can't control myself. Just let me—! (PERCINET *takes him out.*)

PASQUINOT (*also trying to return to the wall*). I'll kill him!

SYLVETTE (*dragging* PASQUINOT *out*). The air is so damp! Think of your rheumatism! (*They go out.*)

(*Little by little it grows dark. For a moment the*

stage is empty. Then, in PASQUINOT'S *park, enter* STRAFOREL *and swordsmen, musicians, and torch-bearers.*)

STRAFOREL. I see one star already. The day is dying. (*He places his men about the stage.*) Stay there—you, there—and you, there. The hour is near. You will see, as the clock strikes eight, a figure in white enter on this side. Then I whistle—(*He looks at the sky again.*) The moon? Splendid! Every effect is perfect tonight! (*Examining the costumes of his band.*) The capes and mantles are excellent. Look a little more dangerous, over there! Now, ready? (*A sedan-chair is brought in.*) The chair over there in the shade. (*Seeing the negroes who carry the chair.*) The negroes are good! (*Speaking at a distance.*) Torches, there, you understand you are not to come until you receive the signal? (*The faint reflection of the torches is seen at the back of the stage, through the underbrush. Enter the musicians.*) Musicians? There—at the back. Now a little distinction and life! Vary your poses from time to time. Stand straight, mandolin! Sit down, alto! There. (*Severely to a swordsman.*) You, first mask, don't look so harmless—I want a villainous slouch! Good! Now, instruments, play softly—tune up! Good —tra la la! (*He puts on his mask.*)

(PERCINET *enters slowly from the other side of the stage. As he speaks the following lines, the stage becomes darker, until at the end, it is night.*)

PERCINET. My father is calmer now. The day is dying, and the intoxicating odor of the elders is wafted

to me; the flowers close their petals in the gray of the evening—

STRAFOREL (*aside to the violins*). Music!

(*The musicians play softly until the end of the act.*)

PERCINET. I tremble like a reed. She is coming!

STRAFOREL (*to the musicians*). Amoroso!

PERCINET. My first evening meeting—I can scarcely stand! The evening breeze sounds like the fluttering of her dress. Now I can't see the flowers, but I can smell them. Ah, this great tree, with a star above it—Music? Who—? (*A pause.*) Night has come. (*After another pause, a clock strikes eight in the distance.* SYLVETTE *appears at the back of her park.*)

SYLVETTE. The hour has struck. He must be waiting.

(*A whistle is heard.* STRAFOREL *rises in front of* SYLVETTE, *and torch-bearers appear in the background.* SYLVETTE *screams. The swordsmen seize and put her into the sedan-chair.*)

SYLVETTE. Help! Help!

PERCINET. Great Heavens!

SYLVETTE. Percinet, they are carrying me off!

PERCINET (*leaping to the wall*). I come! (*When he reaches the top of the wall, he draws his sword, jumps down on the other side, and engages four or five swordsmen in combat. They flee before him.*) There, and there, and there!

STRAFOREL (*to the musicians*). Tremolo.

(*The violins now play a dramatic tremolo.*)

STRAFOREL. Per Bacco, he's the devil, that child!

(PERCINET *now engages* STRAFOREL *in a duel.* STRAFOREL, *after a few thrusts, puts his hand to his breast.*) I—I'm mortally wounded! (*He falls.*)

PERCINET (*running to* SYLVETTE, *who sits in the sedan-chair*). Sylvette! (*He kneels to her.*)

SYLVETTE. My savior!

PASQUINOT (*entering*). Bergamin's son! Your savior? Your savior? I give you to him!

SYLVETTE *and* PERCINET. Heavens!

(BERGAMIN *now appears on his side of the wall.*)

PASQUINOT (*to* BERGAMIN, *who is seen on top of the wall*). Bergamin, your son is a hero! Let us forget our quarrels, and make these children happy!

BERGAMIN (*solemnly*). I hate you no more!

PERCINET. Sylvette, don't speak loud: I know I am dreaming. But don't wake me!

BERGAMIN. Our hatred is ended in the marriage of our dear ones. (*Indicating the wall.*) Henceforth let there be no Pyrenees!

PERCINET. Who would have believed that my father could change so!

SYLVETTE. I told you everything would turn out happily! (*While the lovers go up stage with* PASQUINOT, STRAFOREL *rises and hands a folded paper to* BERGAMIN.)

BERGAMIN (*aside*). What is it? This paper—your signature? What is it, if you please?

STRAFOREL (*bowing*). Monsieur, it's my bill! (*He falls down again.*)

CURTAIN

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

ARRANGED FROM

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

A Midsummer Night's Dream

THE CHARACTERS

QUINCE.
BOTTOM.
FLUTE.
STARVELING (old and deaf).
SNOUT.
SNUG (a little man with a thin voice).

PLACE. In Athens.
TIME. Long ago.

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

Scene I

A room, furnished with a table and a few benches or stools. On the table lie the manuscripts of the parts, ready to be distributed to the actors. Quince *stands back of the table, with an important manner. The others are sitting and standing around in various attitudes.* Bottom *is looking over one of the copies of the play.*

Quince (*looking around pompously*). Is all our company here?

Bottom (*looking up from his reading*). You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quince (*taking up the roll*). Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bottom. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quince. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bottom. A very good piece of work, I assure you,

and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourself.

QUINCE. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split. (*He recites to show his ability.*)

> The raging rocks
> And shivering shocks
> Shall break the locks
> Of prison-gates;
> And Phibbus' car
> Shall shine from far,
> And make and mar
> The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This was Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE (*giving him his part*). Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE. What is this Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne—Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

QUINCE. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM. Well, proceed.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. (*Gives him the part.*) Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. You, Pyramus's father (*Giving him part.*); myself, Thisby's father; Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG (*in his thin voice*). Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM. Let me play the lion too. I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will

roar, that I will make the Duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

QUINCE. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE. You can play no part but Pyramus: for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentlemanlike man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM. Well, I will undertake it. But look you (*Looking over the script.*), there are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOTTOM. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

QUINCE. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING (*shaking his head*). I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wildfowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to't.

SNOUT. Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—"Ladies,"—or, "Fair Ladies,—I would wish you,"—or, "I would request you,"—or, "I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:"—and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

QUINCE. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNUG. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM. A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE. Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM. Why, then may you leave the casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNUG. You never can bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM. Some man or other must present Wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts.

(*They all sit down and begin to study as the* CURTAIN *falls.*)

Scene II

(*A plain stage. Enter* Quince *as the* Prologue. *He wears an ornate robe over the Greek costume he wore in the first act.*)

Prologue

If we offend, it is with our good-will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good-will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

(*Enter* Bottom *as* Pyramus, Flute *as* Thisbe, Snout *as* Wall, Starveling *as* Moonshine, *and* Snug *as* Lion.

Pyramus *and* Thisbe *are in Greek costume,* Pyramus *wearing a helmet and sword.* Snout *wears a sandwich-man's boards, marked like a wall.* Starveling *carries a lantern, a faggot of thorn branches, and a toy dog.* Snug *wears a lion skin and a crude lion's head. All the actors must play this scene with intense seriousness.*)

PROLOGUE

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth makes all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
(PYRAMUS *bows.*)
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain'.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
(WALL *holds up his fingers to show the chink.*)
To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And, Thisby tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

QUINCE, AS PROLOGUE, INTRODUCES THE CHARACTERS

From a production of "Pyramus and Thisbe," given by the Dramatic Club of the Horace Mann School for Boys.

(PYRAMUS, THISBE, LION, *and* MOONSHINE *leave the stage.* PROLOGUE *goes to one side, not quite out of sight. Here he pulls out the scroll of the play, and sits ready to prompt, but has great difficulty in keeping the place.* WALL *addresses the audience.*)

WALL

In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
(*Holds up fingers.*)
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

(WALL *takes his place in the center of the stage. Enter* PYRAMUS. *The visor of his helmet continues, much to his annoyance, to fall down at most inopportune moments during his interview with* THISBE.)

PYRAMUS

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack!
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
(*After an awkward pause,* WALL *holds up his fingers.*)
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!
(*He turns away in despair, but turns back when* THISBE *enters and begins to speak.*)

THISBE

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS

I see a voice: now will I to the chink
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

THISBE

My love! thou art, my love I think.

PYRAMUS

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And like Limander am I trusty still.

THISBE

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS

O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

(*Exeunt* PYRAMUS *and* THISBE.)

WALL

Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. (*Exit.*)
(*Enter* LION *and* MOONSHINE. LION *speaks in a very low and gentle voice.*)

LION

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
(*Takes off his lion's head.*)
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
No lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity of my life.
(*He moves back and puts his head on again.* MOONSHINE *comes forward to explain himself.*)

MOONSHINE

This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present—
(*His memory fails and there is a painful pause. He looks over to* QUINCE, *who is unable to find the place.*)
This lanthorn doth the hornèd moon present—
Myself—er—the man—
Myself the man—er—
(QUINCE *finds the place at last, and prompts in a very audible voice.*)

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be—er—
(*Again he looks to* QUINCE *for aid in vain.*)
All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.
(MOONSHINE *takes his place at one side of the stage. Enter* THISBE.)

THISBE

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

LION (*roaring*)

Oh—
(LION *chases* THISBE *around the stage and then off. He returns and shakes fiercely the mantle that she has dropped in her flight. He leaves it in the middle of the stage, and goes off.*
Re-enter PYRAMUS.)

PYRAMUS

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
(*He sees the mantle.*)
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates! come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!
O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus.
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop:
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
(*With some difficulty he stabs himself.*)
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight:—

(MOONSHINE *doesn't take the cue, so he repeats the line in a louder tone.*)

Moon, take thy flight:—

(*Finally he gets up, pushes* MOONSHINE *out, and comes back to the center of the stage.*)

Now die, die, die, die, die. (*He dies.*)

(*Re-enter* THISBE.)

THISBE

Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.

(*She picks up his head to kiss him, and lets it fall on to the floor several times. Finally* PYRAMUS *surreptitiously pulls the mantle under his head.*)

These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks
Are gone, are gone;
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;

(*She looks around in vain for the sword, and finally* PYRAMUS *hands it up to her.*)

Come, blade, my breast imbrue;

(*She stabs herself.*)

And, farewell friends,—
Thus Thisby ends,—
Adieu, adieu, adieu!

(*She falls dead on* PYRAMUS.

The lovers arise and are joined by the other characters. All bow to the audience as the CURTAIN *falls.*)

A COMEDIE ROYALL

BY

EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ELIZABETH, Queen of England.
SIR JOHN HARTWYND.
ROYALL HARTWYND, his son.
SIR EDWARD AVIS.
LORD MORTIMER FARTHORNE.
PHYLLIDA FRENCH, Lady in waiting to Elizabeth.

The period is 1580. The place is England. The scene is an audience-chamber of the palace. The time is noon of an April day.

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A COMEDIE ROYALL

The scene is an audience-chamber, with carved fireplace. Mullioned windows back, left and right. Large entrance-door, back center, covered with tapestried hangings. A throne-like chair, on a dais, right. A carved table, left, with chairs on either side. Curtain-music, any Elizabethan air.

As the curtain rises, ELIZABETH *stands upon the dais, having apparently arisen from the throne in haste and anger.* PHYLLIDA *stands a little to left of dais with face hidden in her hands.* ROYALL HARTWYND *stands back in shadow of curtains of window, left back.* AVIS, FARTHORNE, *and* JOHN HARTWYND *stand grouped by door, back center, as if about to leave the chamber.*

ELIZABETH. Nay, Lords, not yet! Quit not our chamber here,
Till that there buzz into the ears o' ye
A somewhat, that may sting ye into grace
Of fair and seemlier manners! 'Od's my life!
Is this our audience-chamber where ye stand,
Or is't our apery?

AVIS. Your Majesty—
Your gracious Majesty,—we meant not,—we—

ELIZABETH. You meant not! 'S' death! You meant not. Harkye now!
Hell's aristocracy, my Lord, is built

Of men that "meant not"! Here, with leave, my Lords,
Here in our audience-chamber, you beguile
An hour or twain, in royal company;
Claims such a privilege no dignity?
What dignity show ye? 'Fore Heaven I swear
Ye show your Queen the dignity of apes
That scent a jest to feed a grin, withal,
In every wind that blows! Maid Malapert—

(PHYLLIDA, *whom the Queen indicates, takes her hands from before her tear-stained face, and makes a gesture of timid and supplicating deference toward the Queen.*)

A baby sheep, from country sheepfold new,
Bleats out, responding to an idle word,
A sheep's own answer;—and to every lip
Straight leaps an apish grin!—To all save one!
Where passed the lad? Where's Royall Hartwynd?

SIR JOHN. Ah!
Your Majesty, my son but drew apart,
Fearing the scathe of that celestial wrath
That in your eyes doth wither up men's souls.

ELIZABETH. Celestial wrath? Celestial fire o' tow!
The Tudor wrath ne'er drew its heat, my Lord,
From any fire of Heaven!—Heard you not?
I bade call Royall Hartwynd!

(SIR JOHN *crosses to window, left back, and summons* ROYALL *from its curtained recess.*)

SIR JOHN. Please your Grace,
I plead that this my son did stand apart—

ELIZABETH. Did "stand apart"! 'Twould seem, my Lord,

The royal hangman late had quartered him
So in your speech your son doth "stand apart"!
Young Royall Hartwynd, stand forth in our sight,
(ROYALL *advances to center and makes profound obeisance.*)
An only man, encompassed round with apes!
Alone you smiled not, when this lambling here,
(PHYLLIDA *gives a choking, hysterical sob.*)
Brought booby blundering of country phrase
To woo the grins of her Queen's apery!

ROYALL. Your Majesty, I saw no food for jest
In the poor phrase of this poor maiden here,
Nor saw I jest in—aught that followed it!

ELIZABETH (*descending from dais*). Young sir, when churchly service claims your powers,
(For this, your father hath acquainted me
Your life to churchly use is dedicate)
Our word for 't, in your loyal gravity
The church will be the gainer.
(*She extends her hand, which* ROYALL, *kneeling, kisses. She then passes toward doors, back center. Turning, she addresses* PHYLLIDA.)

ELIZABETH. Harkye, wench!
Since presently we have a word for you.
Bide here till 'tis our pleasure to return.
The country sheepfold calls its country sheep;
Tomorrow's dawn shall speed you back to it!
(*To the men.*)
My Lords, the keeper of our apery
Keeps ever room behind its gilded bars

For any ape unhousen!

(*Exit* ELIZABETH, *through door, back center, all making profound reverences. As the doors close after* ELIZABETH, PHYLLIDA *bursts into low hysterical sobbing, and rushes across room to window, left back, where she throws herself on her knees by its cushions, with face hidden. As the men come forward,* ROYALL *goes quietly back and draws the curtains before her.*)

FARTHORNE. That a man must take such words from a woman! The sting of her cuts sharp to the heart!

AVIS. Good Cousin, let your wits whisper there's that in the Tower yonder cuts sharper than a woman's speech. A lucky sharpness, i' faith, whose sting falls not here (*Indicates neck.*) but here! (*Hand on heart with mock sigh.*)

SIR JOHN. Our royal mistress hath drawn from bluff King Hal, with much else, the trick to make a jest not of the royal jesting—a bird of price to him that jests that jest!

AVIS. Yet was the jest worth all it cost. E'en the apes she aped us must have grinned, when—"Red, your Majesty!" quoth Maid Innocence—(*Chokes with laughter.* ROYALL *at window left draws curtains closer.*)—and she—the Queen—(*Laughs again.*)

FARTHORNE. So thought not our young Master Parson yonder! Zounds! Wisely choose you, old Sir John, to shear those love-locks 'neath a churchly hat! "No food for jest!" cants he!

(ROYALL *comes down to center.*)

AVIS. Young Master Parson! Young Master Saint! Harkye, Gentlemen! (*Indicates* ROYALL *with profound salutation.*) Here struts Saint Royall, newly sainted by her sainted Majesty, of not too saintly speech!

(AVIS *and* FARTHORNE *laugh.*)

ROYALL. My Lords, 'tis not with royalty alone a jest may be driven past the road of safety. Faith, 'tis no psalm book swings here at my side (*Touches sword.*); and the sole church that yet holds vow of mine, is the church militant!

(AVIS *and* FARTHORNE *clap their hands to their swords.*)

SIR JOHN. I pray you, gentlemen—son Royall, hold your peace! The Queen's Majesty may not yet have passed so far but that—

FARTHORNE. Nay, no farther than to her tiring glass, there to fling loose the locks that gentle Spenser glorifies.

AVIS. And—"What poor color give you then to these my locks?" saith she, and those her 'tiring maids, less innocent than our poor Maid Innocence, cry, "Color? As the minted gold they shine!"

(AVIS *and* FARTHORNE *take up their plumed hats and move backward toward doors.*)

FARTHORNE. As sunbeams, making light a shady world! (*Laughs.*)

AVIS. As flashing wings of golden butterflies! (*Laughs.*)

FARTHORNE. As sunrise shimmer on a saffron sea! (*Laughs.*)

AVIS. As the new aureole of our fighting saint! (*Indicates Royall.*)

FARTHORNE. Say rather coxscomb of Saint Peter's cock, that clarions a denial of saintliness! (*Flings open the doors.*)

ROYALL. I' faith the Queen's menagerie's afoot—St. Peter's cock, saluting the Queen's apes! (*Bows profoundly.*)

FARTHORNE. 'S' death, young sir! (*Hand on sword.*)

AVIS. Peace, Cousin! Open doors be open ears to drink in words. Dame Caution bids—best speak not! Give ye god-den, Sir John and young Sir Parson!

(FARTHORNE *and* AVIS *exeunt. Doors close behind them.*)

ROYALL. Young Sir Parson! Zounds, Father, that word must hound me down no more! No parson I, nor ever will be parson!

SIR JOHN. Your tongue behind your teeth, sir! With preferment clear before you as ne'er till this day dawned—he'll be no parson, saith he! A beggarly sixth son of a father so crippled in estate, that scarce he goes fit doubleted to court.

ROYALL. Nay, Father, when a single doublet wastes, as yours, the whole fruit of a loom— (*Indicates* SIR JOHN'S *portly paunch.*)

SIR JOHN. Hold peace, I say! Or, by the Lord I'll birch your parsonship! All my six sons save you, afoot and afloat to the world's end, chasing that fleet-foot jade, Dame Fortune,—and you, forsooth, would

make calf-run after them, and leave mine age a sunless day indeed, for that I have no son!

ROYALL. Nay, Father, an I could serve you here, save under churchly colors—

SIR JOHN. How else? A simple knight, I have scant word at court! Parson or naught, when seeking for preferment!

ROYALL. Father, never Hartwynd yet swore fealty to a sovereign's banner, when in his heart of hearts he waited but his foeman's trumpet-call to be his foeman's slave.

SIR JOHN. What driveling is this?

ROYALL. So would it be if I swore service to the church while my young blood beat this world's battle-call! I tell you, Father, this the blood you poured into my veins stalks not to music of a priestly psalm, but dances to an April roundelay! I say you nay! Not for preferment, not for place or gold, a Hartwynd e'er pledged caitiff service to a king; and ask me not—for God's life! I say nay!—to pledge such service to the King of Kings!

SIR JOHN (*gasping with rage*). A Bedlam! A Bedlam! Bring the cords and whip! And she, your Queen, so praised within the hour your churchmanship to be, my old heart biggened with the dream I'd see you yet Her Majesty's privy chaplain! A jackanapes! A malapert! A murrain on your insolence! (*Exit, in haste and wrath.*)

ROYALL (*laughing*). A son of his—Heaven's grace! —his son a parson! They're gone at last! And now for

the one parson's trick of which I'm master—comfort of the afflicted, by'r Lady!—when affliction looks through dew-wet violet eyes, affliction's comfort is sweet ministry! (*He crosses to the closed curtains of window, left back.*)

ROYALL. Fair Mistress French! (*There is no answer.*) Sweet Mistress Phyllida! (*The curtains faintly stir.*) Nay, then, my little sweetheart! I pray you come you forth!

(PHYLLIDA *comes forth from curtains, arranging her hair and coif, which are in some disorder; she draws long sighing breaths as she speaks, and from time to time dries her eyes.*)

PHYLLIDA. She hath gone, Master Hartwynd? 'Tis safe and sure, she hath gone?

ROYALL. Master me no master, dear and fair my maid! From thy lips "Parson" were scarce hatefuller!

PHYLLIDA. 'Tis sure she's gone?

ROYALL. Ay, hath she! There's no other queen bides here than this, the little queen of my poor heart! (*He kisses her hand.*)

PHYLLIDA. Queen? Nay, 'twas not queen, that name the Queen did name me! 'Twas "sheep" quoth she! 'Twas "malapert" quoth she! (*Weeps again.*) You heard? Ay! All the world heard, so rang her voice through all the world!

ROYALL. I heard. And I saw! And when her swinging hand laid buffet on that roseleaf cheek of thine—Heaven's grace!—'twas then, as saith Sir John, I "stood apart," lest I should speak to England's Queen what Englishman speaks not to any woman!

PHYLLIDA (*rubbing her cheek*). Her swinging hand! I' faith, 'tis marvel any woman's hand hath such a swing! Methought our old cow Cloversides had lifted her hoof against me!

ROYALL. When I had buffets as a lad—an' faith Sir John ne'er spared them!—'twas my mother's gentle wont to medicine them by a simple magic—shall I show thee?—Thy mother is not here to comfort thee (for which mercy I give thanks), so sure 'tis but my duty—(*Gently kisses her cheek.*)

PHYLLIDA (*nestling to him*). Sure, 'tis quaint medicine!

ROYALL. 'Tis medicine that as the parson saith, 'Tis blesseder to give than to receive! (*Lifts her face and kisses her lingeringly on the lips.*)

PHYLLIDA (*releasing herself*). Nay, sir, the hurt reached not my lips!

ROYALL. 'Tis well the healing should outrun the hurt!
But heart o' me! Here is a hurt indeed
That doth outrun all healing!

PHYLLIDA. Nay, it puzzles me sore why all this evil should be. Here sat the Queen a-jesting with the lords —I heard them not, I did but gaze at thee!—and of a sudden saith Her Majesty—"Out of the mouths of babes! The maid shall speak! What color, child, be these poor locks of mine?" Then said I—

ROYALL. "Red!" Heaven's footstool! "Red," said you!—When of all colors on Heaven's footstool, red is the hue she'd least her locks should be!

PHYLLIDA. But red God made them—and 'tis red they are!

ROYALL. The reason of all reasons, dear my maid, why thou shouldst not say red!

PHYLLIDA (*sobs*). O me! O me! When I was but a little maid at home, they beat me sore for e'en a little lie; and now I'm maid in waiting at the court, they cuff me that I tell not monstrous ones!

ROYALL. See you, love, God rules the country,—or measurably He rules it; but the court a goddess rules; a goddess none too godly! But the mischief's done—what comes?

PHYLLIDA. Naught comes—all goes! I go! Heard you not so? "Sheep to her country sheepfold!" quoth the Queen!—"We speed you thence, ere yet tomorrow dawns!" I pack me home to Devon!

ROYALL. Thou lovest Devon?

PHYLLIDA. Love Devon! That do I! Ah! but its fields are green! But what I love not is the man who waits me there,—the man they'll wed me to.

ROYALL. They'll wed thee?

PHYLLIDA. So swore my step-dame. "An thou win not grace at court," quoth she, "the hour that sees thee back, will speed thee on thy way to church, there to be sealed fourth bride of old Squire Hunbers, who hath bid for thee!" Ah, Heaven 'fend me!

ROYALL. They shall not send thee back! Sooner we'll take the road, a wandering gypsy pair, with love for food and stars to warm us by! But how win back the favor of the Queen?

PHYLLIDA. If she but loved thee as I love thee, thy sole pleading would suffice.

ROYALL. She loves me not . . . and yet! A thought, my maid! The Virgin Queen loves no man; yet they say that virgins, queens or no, do love men's love. I know not, I! My father bred me for a parson!

PHYLLIDA. But thou dost not love her? (*Her lips quiver.*)

ROYALL. Nay, Maid Innocence! I love as every loyal English heart must love the mighty Queen whose reign hath rained down peace and glory on our isle; but man to woman . . . Sweet, thou knowest the color of her hair—'tis not like thine!

PHYLLIDA. How then?

ROYALL. Leave all to me! Love, we'll play comedy, with love as prize, and love as prompter too. Nay—thou needst do naught! Ope not those hedge-rose lips, lest country truth pop out again, and straight undo us both! Say "yes!"—if I say "Is't!" Say "Nay" when I say, "'Twas not so!" Naught else! Hist! Methinks the Queen is here!

PHYLLIDA. Yet see I not—

ROYALL. Seek not to see! 'Tis yea or nay from thee! Naught else! Guard thee! Naught else!

(*He leads her to fireplace, and moves several paces away from her. She runs toward him.*)

PHYLLIDA. Love! Have I vexed thee!

ROYALL. Zounds! Back to place, Maid Innocence!

(*She hesitatingly and apparently much bewildered*

and woe-begone, moves back to the opposite side of the fireplace.)

ROYALL. Thou vex me, Rose o' Spring! Nay—cans't thou understand? 'Tis comedy! We play an hour at comedy!

(*The doors are flung open, and* ELIZABETH *enters. She does not for the moment see* ROYALL *and* PHYLLIDA *at the fireplace.*)

ELIZABETH. Now, by my halidom!
'Tis rare we've tasted such a cup of sack!
Our humor's warm with it!

(*Sees* ROYALL *and* PHYLLIDA.)

What have we here?
Our maid disgraced, in gossip with our parson?
They note me not.

(*Passes, moving quietly to seat on dais.*)

ROYALL. Alack, kind Mistress French,
That ever my rash word should draw you down
Our sovereign's high displeasure! (*Aside to* PHYLLIDA.)
Weep! 'Tis safe!

(PHYLLIDA *weeps.*)

ELIZABETH. His word, quoth he! There is a riddle here!

ROYALL. When she demanded of thee, unaware,
The color of those glorious locks of hers,
What wonder if there swam up in thy thought
The color thou had'st heard me name so oft,
As of all hues, most royal!

ELIZABETH. Well said I
The lad hath parts. The church shall give him up.

'Twere waste to make him parson!

ROYALL. Red!

It is the color of the sunset skies
When that they flame most glorious; 'tis the hue
Of all things rich and vital—nay, the blood
That feeds the heart,—what is that blood but red?
It is the color of the flag that floats
Above the noblest land God's red sun sees;
Then fitly lends its color to the locks
Of God, His mightiest woman!

ELIZABETH. Parson, he!

He hath a tongue would grace an emperor!

PHYLLIDA. Yet saidst thou not when late we stood alone—

ROYALL (*to* PHYLLIDA). Zounds! Wilt not weep? (*She weeps.*)
Such words as these, mine heart
Hath oft poured forth into thine innocent ears,
To ease that secret of tormenting love
To none save thee confided.

ELIZABETH. Love, said he?

ROYALL. The poor, mad fool who dares to lift his eyes
Unto the shrine of her who is his Heaven
Must look to meet the fate of Phaëton
Death-scorched by too near splendor;—ay, the fate
Of moth, that circling inward to the flame
Dies, by that flame consumed. E'en so am I,
I die of love for her I may not love—
The Queen who may love no man!

(*Dashes his hand across his eyes, as though to stanch tears.*)

PHYLLIDA (*aside to* ROYALL). When you weep
Must I weep still?

ROYALL (*to* PHYLLIDA). Stanch not your tears an instant!

ELIZABETH (*rising*). Young Royall Hartwynd, thou hast yet to learn
That every queen's a woman!

ROYALL (*turning and falling on his knee*).
Fire of Heaven!
The Queen! My shame consumes me!

PHYLLIDA. Did'st not know
The Queen was here? Why I—

(*He turns over his shoulder at her a glare of desperate appeal. She falls to weeping again.*)

ELIZABETH. Again I say
The Queen's a woman. Such a love as thine
Makes woman thrice a queen. Rise, sir, and stand
Fearless before me. Ay! Beside me, sir!

(ROYALL *rises from his knee.* PHYLLIDA *ceases to weep and stares at them in terrified astonishment.*)
Am I slave, or England's Queen?
And if a queen, then queen o'er mine own love
To give it where I will. If 'twere our whim,
Nay, 'twere our royal purpose, to command
A commoner be King Consort—by the rood,
Were, by that grace, the commoner not a king?
Sir, of all loves that e'er have cried on me,
Yours, crying as you thought, unheard of me,

Out of a man's heart, most hath kindled me.
Fear not to stand before me.

ROYALL (*approaching nearer, again kneels*).

Nay, your Grace, my place is here. (*To himself.*) Moreover, presently,
If right I read signs of yon April face
My place will be before the headsman's block!

PHYLLIDA. O Love, forgive me!

(*Rushes madly to* ROYALL. *He rises and with manly dignity stands before her, as if to protect her from the Queen's wrath. She falls on her knees, catching and weeping over his hand.*)

O my poor, poor love,
What bitter end to our poor comedy!
She'll marry thee! The Queen will marry thee!

ROYALL (*aside*). Wits serve me now! Or else farewell the head
My whirling wits inhabit!

ELIZABETH. Comedy!
What bleats this lamb o' Bedlam? Comedy?

ROYALL. Your Majesty,
The comedy is over. Naught remains
But for the Player-Queen—a queen indeed
Of players, as she is a queen of queens—
To speak our fate, speaking its epilogue.

ELIZABETH. A queen—of players?

ROYALL. Aye, as queen in all.
Your Grace's queenly eyes that naught can film
Read the poor subterfuge, whereby young love
Sought 'scape from cruel parting—punished it

By stooping from the throne to act a part—
Brought our parts to confusion! (*Aside.*) Will she take?
Would I'd turned parson ere that I turned player!

ELIZABETH (*after a pause, in which she has studied his immovable face; faintly and sardonically smiling*).
Your Queen, young sir, is player, e'en in this,—
She sometimes takes a cue. . . . You say the truth—
The comedy is done. The Player-Queen
Must get her to her throne, to yawn away
(*Mounts dais.*)
The queenly days, which, when love visiteth
'Tis but as mummer, mumming comedy!
Get you to church! Nay, not as parson, sir!
Too many parsons now go mumming it.
We'll have no more. Get you to church, I say,
To kneel, with her, yon Devon lamb o' grace,
This side the altar-rails. God guard you then!
The sack that warms the humor of our blood
Lends not its warmth forever. Get you hence!
But first—your sword!

(*Comes down from dais, holding out her hand imperatively.*)

ROYALL. My sword! Your Majesty!
God knoweth sword and life your forfeit be.
But—let my father's name and service plead
Against this black disgrace!—My life, O Queen!
But not my sword! Break not my sword!

ELIZABETH. Your sword! To your knee again.
Lest we do say—your life!

PHYLLIDA. Ah! Mercy, Madam!

(ROYALL *hands her his sword, first kissing its blade. She motions him to kneel. He obeys. She strikes him lightly on the shoulder with the sword.*)

ELIZABETH. Rise up, Sir Royall Hartwynd, belted knight!

(*He springs up with a gesture of ecstasy.*)

Take back thy sword: there's land shall mate with it.
And guard thy lands, and guard thy mate and young:
And guard thine England, and thine England's Queen,
So long as hand and sword have strength to meet!

ROYALL. Once more I say . . . and hear me King of Kings! . . .

My shamed soul speak! . . . I kneel your knight and slave. . . .

God's mightiest of women . . . and my Queen!

(ELIZABETH *permits him to kiss her hand, looking down upon him with a wistful smile. Then she motions* PHYLLIDA *to approach. She gives* PHYLLIDA *to* ROYALL'S *arms.* ELIZABETH *moves slowly down the room toward the doors. Looking back, she says, with a light sigh.*)

ELIZABETH. Nay! When the man, and not the courtier speaks,

My Lord, another claims that name from you!

CURTAIN

THE FALCON

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The Count Federigo delgi Alberighi.
Filippo, the Count's foster-brother.
The Lady Giovanna.
Elisabetta, the Count's nurse.

THE FALCON

SCENE. *An Italian cottage. Castle and mountains seen through window.*

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in window, darning. The* COUNT *with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.*

ELISABETTA. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

COUNT. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?
My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven. (*Crosses to chair.*)
I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me:
I am as lone and loveless as thyself. (*Sits in chair.*)
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be* jealous!
Thou should'st be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna

Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth—
No, no again to that. (*Rises and turns.*)
My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

ELISABETTA. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

COUNT. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.
What art thou doing there?

ELISABETTA. Darning, your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now:
Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.
(*Points to necklace round her neck.*)
This old thing here, they are but blue beads—my Piero,
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,
Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

COUNT. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

ELISABETTA. She told thee as much?

COUNT. No, no—a friend of hers.

ELISABETTA. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

COUNT. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

ELISABETTA. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

COUNT. Not yet!
ELISABETTA. She should return thy necklace then.
COUNT. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller
To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.
ELISABETTA. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know? She knows
There's none such other—
COUNT. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

(*Enter* FILIPPO.)

FILIPPO. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them—that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that's positive again—that's better!

ELISABETTA. Sh—sh—Filippo!

FILIPPO (*turns half round*). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the pea-hens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

ELISABETTA. Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that

you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

COUNT. Let him—he never spares me to my face!

FILIPPO. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

COUNT. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

(ELISABETTA *crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*)

FILIPPO. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

COUNT. No bread?

FILIPPO. Half a breakfast for a rat!

COUNT. Milk?

FILIPPO. Three laps for a cat!

COUNT. Cheese?

FILIPPO. A supper for twelve mites.

COUNT. Eggs?

FILIPPO. One, but addled.

COUNT. No bird?

FILIPPO. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

COUNT. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

FILIPPO. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

COUNT. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,
For he return'd to the rich father: I
But add my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make
Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds
Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.
(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-even?
Today, my beauty, thou must dash us down
Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!
(*Exit, followed by* FILIPPO.)

ELISABETTA. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life, too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.*) Come in, Madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the* LADY GIOVANNA *enters, then moves*

chair towards the hearth.) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

(LADY GIOVANNA *moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. Can I speak with the Count?

ELISABETTA. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. And he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages. (*Raises her hands.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

ELISABETTA (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

LADY GIOVANNA. Where is the Count?

ELISABETTA. Just gone
To fly his falcon.

LADY GIOVANNA. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.

ELISABETTA. Holy mother!
To breakfast! Oh, sweet saints! one plate of prunes!
Well, Madam, I will give your message to him.

(*Exit.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. His falcon, and I come to ask for
his falcon,
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—
Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—
His one companion here—nay, I have heard
That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,
(*Shows diamond necklace.*)
He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon
Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?
(*Rises and moves as she speaks.*) O my sick boy!
My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say
What can I do—what can I get for thee?
He answers, "Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well." Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love—
To marry him?—(*Pause.*)—I can never marry him.
His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,
Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I—
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—
How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?

(*Puts diamonds in her casket.*)

(*Re-enter* COUNT *and* FILIPPO. COUNT *turns to* FILIPPO.)

COUNT. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.

FILIPPO. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.

COUNT. Do what I said! (*Advances and bows low.*) Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.

LADY GIOVANNA. And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.

COUNT. 'Tis long since we have met!

LADY GIOVANNA. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.

COUNT. I am much honour'd—yes—

(*Turns to* FILIPPO.) Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?

FILIPPO. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow! (*Exit.*)

COUNT. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.

LADY GIOVANNA. In cottage or in palace, being still
Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.

COUNT. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

LADY GIOVANNA. Yet I come
To ask a gift. (*Moves toward him a little.*)

COUNT. It will be hard, I fear,

To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.
LADY GIOVANNA. But my boy—
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!
COUNT. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes—your boy?
LADY GIOVANNA. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.
COUNT. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough:
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.
LADY GIOVANNA. Oh yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.
COUNT. How charm'd he was! what wonder?—A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.
LADY GIOVANNA (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her at?
COUNT. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.
I had no heart to part with her for money.
LADY GIOVANNA. No, not for money.
(COUNT *turns away and sighs.*)
Wherefore do you sigh?
COUNT. I have lost a friend of late.
LADY GIOVANNA. I could sigh with you
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;
And if he leave me—all the rest of life—
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.

(*Looking at wreath on wall.*)

COUNT. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
New-wakening year. (*Goes and takes down wreath.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. And yet I never saw
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

COUNT (*holding wreath toward her*).
Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?

LADY GIOVANNA. How long ago was that?

COUNT. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,
And softly placed the chaplet on her head.
A color, which has color'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;
And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it. (*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*)

LADY GIOVANNA (*after pause*). How long since do you say?

COUNT. That was the very year before you married.

LADY GIOVANNA. When I was married you were at the wars.

COUNT. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars. (*Replaces wreath whence he has taken it.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumor then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

COUNT. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

LADY GIOVANNA. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

COUNT. No, no, not quite, Madonna, not yet, not yet.

(*Re-enter* FILIPPO.)

FILIPPO. My lord, a word with you.

COUNT. Pray, pardon me!

(LADY GIOVANNA *crosses and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*)

COUNT (*to* FILIPPO). What is it, Filippo?

FILIPPO. Spoons, your lordship.

COUNT. Spoons!

FILIPPO. Yes, my lord, for wasn't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we haven't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

COUNT. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

FILIPPO. Half o' one, my lord!

COUNT. How half of one?

FILIPPO. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

COUNT. And the other nine?

FILIPPO. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

COUNT. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean.

(*Exit* FILIPPO.)

LADY GIOVANNA. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence, ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinn'd to the wreath. My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

COUNT. Ay, if you will.

LADY GIOVANNA. It should be if you can.
(*Reads.*) "Dead mountain." Nay, for who could trace a hand
So wild and staggering?

COUNT. This was penn'd, Madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,

When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

LADY GIOVANNA. O heavens! the very letters seem to shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,
Tell me the words—or better—for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,
Repeat them to their music.

COUNT. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

LADY GIOVANNA. That is musically said.

(COUNT *takes guitar.* LADY GIOVANNA *sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*)

COUNT (*sings, playing guitar*).

"Dead mountain flowers, dead mountain-meadow flowers.
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of today,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,
To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers."

(*Enter* ELISABETTA *with cloth.*)

ELISABETTA. A word with you, my lord!

COUNT (*singing*). "O mountain flowers!"

ELISABETTA. A word, my lord! (*Louder.*)

COUNT (*sings*). "Dead flowers!"

ELISABETTA. A word, my lord! (*Louder.*)

COUNT. I pray you pardon me again!

(LADY GIOVANNA, *looking at wreath.*)

COUNT (*to* ELISABETTA). What is it?

ELISABETTA. My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

COUNT. Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor
Fetch'd from the farthest east—we never use it
For fear of breakage—but this day has brought
A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

ELISABETTA. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord: it is broken!

COUNT. My one thing left of value in the world!
No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

ELISABETTA (*pointing through window*). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

COUNT. And yet to speak white truth, my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

ELISABETTA. How can your lordship say so? There, my lord— (*Lays cloth.*)
O my dear son, be not unkind to me.
And one word more. (*Going—returns.*)

COUNT (*touching guitar*). Good! let it be but one.

ELISABETTA. Hath she return'd thy love?

COUNT. Not yet!

ELISABETTA. And will she?

COUNT (*looking at* LADY GIOVANNA). I scarce believe it!

ELISABETTA. Shame upon her then! (*Exit.*)

COUNT (*sings*). "Dead mountain flowers"—
Ah well, my nurse has brok
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken
My china bowl. My memory is as dead.
(*Goes and replaces guitar.*)
Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.
So by your leave if you would hear the rest,
The writing.

LADY GIOVANNA (*holding wreath toward him*). There! my lord, you are a poet,
And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

COUNT. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

(*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches* LADY GIOVANNA'S *hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*)

LADY GIOVANNA (*with dignity*). I did not say, my lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

(*Enter* FILIPPO *with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*)

FILIPPO. Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-

sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank thee, good Filippo.

(*Exit* FILIPPO.)

(*Enter* ELISABETTA *with bird on a dish which she places on table.*)

ELISABETTA (*close to table*). Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

LADY GIOVANNA. I thank you, my good nurse.

FILIPPO (*re-entering with plate of prunes*). And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation. (*Puts plate on table.*)

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

LADY GIOVANNA (*as* COUNT *leads her to table*). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

COUNT. I cannot.
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken
My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine!
Filippo, wine!

(*Sits near table;* FILIPPO *brings flask, fills the* COUNT'S *goblet, then* LADY GIOVANNA'S; ELISABETTA *stands at the back of* LADY GIOVANNA'S *chair.*)

COUNT. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here.
Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.
(*They pledge each other and drink.*)
LADY GIOVANNA. If I might send you down a flask or two
Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine
Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.
FILIPPO (*coming forward*). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.
ELISABETTA. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?
FILIPPO. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.
COUNT. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten—they were ten to one.
The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
Ta'en in the fight—
FILIPPO. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd—
ELISABETTA. Filippo!
COUNT. A troop of horse—

FILIPPO. Five hundred!

COUNT. Say fifty!

FILIPPO. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

FILIPPO. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

COUNT. We may have left their fifty less by five.
However, staying not to count how many,
But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.
I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;
It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
His death to the charm in it.

ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!

COUNT. I cannot tell how long we strove before
Our horses fell beneath us; down we went
Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot. The night,
As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
The truest service, had a touch of frost
That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.
My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.
They left us there for dead!

ELISABETTA. Hear that, my lady!

FILIPPO. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. I see, Filippo!

FILIPPO. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

LADY GIOVANNA. And why, Filippo? (*Smiling absently.*)

FILIPPO. I left him there for dead, too!

ELISABETTA. She smiles at him—how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not
Too proud to look upon the garland, you
Would find it stain'd—

COUNT (*rising*). Silence, Elisabetta!

ELISABETTA. —Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever
Beat for one woman. (*Points to wreath on chair.*)

LADY GIOVANNA (*rising slowly*). I can eat no more!

COUNT. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

LADY GIOVANNA. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.
My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is well.

(ELISABETTA *clears table of bird and salad.* FILIPPO *snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to* LADY GIOVANNA.)

FILIPPO. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship—

LADY GIOVANNA. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more alone?

COUNT. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go!

FILIPPO. But the prunes that your lordship—

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

COUNT. Ay, prune our company of thine own and go!

ELISABETTA. Filippo!

FILIPPO (*turning*). Well, well! the women! (*Exit.*)

COUNT. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

ELISABETTA (*folding up cloth and going*). And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

(*Turns and curtseys stiffly to* LADY GIOVANNA, *then exit.* LADY GIOVANNA *takes out diamond necklace from casket.*)

LADY GIOVANNA. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.
My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

COUNT. No, my most honor'd and long-worshipt lady.
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection—can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.

LADY GIOVANNA. Then I require you to take back your diamonds— (*Offering necklace.*)
I doubt not they are yours. No other heart

Of such magnificence in courtesy
Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them. (COUNT *draws back.*)
If the phrase
"Return" displease you, we will say—exchange them
For your—for your—

COUNT (*takes a step toward her and then back*).
For mine—and what of mine?

LADY GIOVANNA. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

COUNT. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!
For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother—but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

COUNT. Sure?

LADY GIOVANNA. Yes!

COUNT. Is this your brother's order?

LADY GIOVANNA. No!
For he would marry me to the richest man
In Florence; but I think you know the saying—
"Better a man without riches, than riches without a man."

COUNT. A noble saying—and acted on would yield
A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
But lay them there for a moment!

(*Points to table.* LADY GIOVANNA *places necklace on table.*)

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.

LADY GIOVANNA. Then keep your wreath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

COUNT. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.

LADY GIOVANNA. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.

COUNT. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The ghittern to some purpose.

LADY GIOVANNA. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that—and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

COUNT. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once

The wildest of the random youth of Florence
Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.

LADY GIOVANNA. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make
Allowance for a mother—her—who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but today
I dared not—so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: "I should be well again
If the good Count would give me—"

COUNT. Give me.

LADY GIOVANNA. His falcon.

COUNT (*starts back*). My falcon!

LADY GIOVANNA. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!

COUNT. Alas, I cannot!

LADY GIOVANNA. Cannot? Even so!
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?
The boy may die: more blessed were the rags
Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
For her sick son, if he were like to live,

Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
I was to blame—the love you said you bore me—
My lord, we thank you for your entertainment (*With a stately curtsey.*)
And so return—Heaven help him!—to our son. (*Turns.*)
COUNT (*rushes forward*). Stay, stay, I am most unlucky, most unhappy.
You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
I had but emptiness to set before you,
No not a draught of milk, no not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it—she died for you.
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
Will thank me for your entertainment now.
LADY GIOVANNA (*returning*). I bear with him no longer.
COUNT. No, Madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he may.
LADY GIOVANNA. I break with him forever!
COUNT. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love for you forever.
LADY GIOVANNA. You? you? not you! my brother! my hard brother!
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo.

(*Falls at his feet.*)

COUNT (*impetuously*). Why then the dying of my noble bird
Hath served me better than her living—then
(*Takes diamonds from table.*)
These diamonds are both yours and mine—have won
Their value again—beyond all markets—there
I lay them for the first time round your neck.
(*Lays necklace round her neck.*)
And then this chaplet—No more feuds, but peace,
Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle—
(*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*)—crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.
(*Places wreath on her head.*)
Rise—I could almost think that the dead garland
Will break once more into the living blossom.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
(*Raises her with both hands.*) We two together
Will help to heal your son—your son and mine—
We shall do it—we shall do it. (*Embraces her.*)
The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy!

LADY GIOVANNA. And I too, Federigo.

CURTAIN

WHERE BUT IN AMERICA

BY

OSCAR M. WOLFF

CAST

MRS. ESPENHAYNE.
MR. ESPENHAYNE.
HILDA.
SCENE. The Espenhayne dining room.

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WHERE BUT IN AMERICA

The curtain rises on the Espenhayne dining room. It is furnished with modest taste and refinement. There is a door, center, leading to the living room, and a swinging door, left, leading to the kitchen.

The table is set, and ROBERT *and* MOLLIE ESPENHAYNE *are discovered at their evening meal. They are educated, well-bred, young Americans.* ROBERT *is a pleasing, energetic business man of thirty;* MOLLIE, *an attractive woman of twenty-five. The bouillon cups are before them as the curtain rises.*

BOB. Mollie, I heard from the man who owns that house in Kenilworth. He wants to sell the house. He won't rent.

MOLLIE. I really don't care, Bob. That house was too far from the station and it had only one sleeping porch and you know I want white enamelled woodwork in the bedrooms. But, Bob, I've been terribly stupid!

BOB. How so, Mollie?

MOLLIE. You remember the Russells moved to Highland Park last spring?

BOB. Yes; Ed Russell rented a house that had just been built.

MOLLIE. A perfectly darling little house! And

Fanny Russell once told me that the man who built it will put up a house for any one who will take a five-year lease. And she says that the man is very competent and they are simply delighted with their place.

BOB. Why don't we get in touch with the man?

MOLLIE. Wasn't it stupid of me not to think about it? It just flashed into my mind this morning and I sat down at once and sent a special delivery letter to Fanny Russell. I asked her to tell me his name at once, and where we can find him.

BOB. Good! You ought to have an answer by to-morrow or Thursday and we'll go up north and have a talk with him on Saturday.

MOLLIE (*with enthusiasm*). Wouldn't it be wonderful if he'd build just what we want! Fanny Russell says every detail of their house is perfect. Even the garage; they use it—

BOB (*interrupting*). Mollie, that's the one thing I'm afraid of about the North Shore plan. I've said repeatedly that I don't want to buy a car for another year or two. But, here you are, talking about a garage already.

MOLLIE. But you didn't let me finish what I was saying. The Russells have fitted up their garage as a playroom for the children. If we had a garage we could do the same thing.

BOB. Well, let's keep temptation behind us and not even talk to the man about a garage. If we move up north it must be on an economy basis for a few years; just a halfway step between the apartment

and the house we used to plan. You mustn't get your heart set on a car.

MOLLIE. I haven't even thought of one, dear. (BOB *and* MOLLIE *have now both finished the bouillon course and lay down their spoons. Reaching out her hand to touch the table button and at the same time leaning across the table and speaking very impressively.*) Bob, I'm about to ring for Hilda!

BOB. What of it?

MOLLIE (*decidedly and with a touch of impatience*). You know very well, what of it. I don't want Hilda to hear us say *one* word about moving away from the South Side!

BOB (*protesting*). But Mollie—

MOLLIE (*interrupting hurriedly and holding her finger to her lips in warning*). Psst!

(*The next instant* HILDA *enters, left. She is a tall, blond Swedish girl, about twenty-five years old. She is very pretty and carries herself well and looks particularly charming in a maid's dress, with white collars and cuffs and a dainty waitress's apron. Every detail of her dress is immaculate.*)

(*Speaking the instant that* HILDA *appears and talking very rapidly all the time that* HILDA *remains in the room. While she speaks,* MOLLIE *watches* HILDA *rather than* ROBERT, *whom she pretends to be addressing.*) In the last game Gert Jones was my partner. It was game apiece and I dealt and I bid one no trump. I had a very weak no trump. I'll admit that, but I didn't want them to win the rubber. Mrs. Stone bid two

spades and Gert Jones doubled her. Mrs. Green passed and I simply couldn't go to three of anything. Mrs. Stone played two spades, doubled, and she made them. Of course, that put them out and gave them the rubber. I think that was a very foolish double of Gert Jones and then she said it was my fault, because I bid one no trump.

(*As* MOLLIE *begins her flow of words,* BOB *first looks at her in open-mouthed astonishment. Then as he gradually comprehends that* MOLLIE *is merely talking against time he, too, turns his eyes to* HILDA *and watches her closely in her movements around the table. Meanwhile* HILDA *moves quietly and quickly and pays no attention to anything except the work she has in hand. She carries a small serving tray and, as* MOLLIE *speaks,* HILDA *first takes the bouillon cups from the table, then brings the carving-knife and fork from the sideboard and places them before* ROBERT *and then, with the empty bouillon cups, exit left.* BOB *and* MOLLIE *are both watching* HILDA *as she goes out. The instant the door swings shut behind her,* MOLLIE *relaxes with a sigh and* ROBERT *leans across the table to speak.*)

BOB. Mollie, why not be sensible about this thing! Have a talk with Hilda and find out if she will move north with us.

MOLLIE. That's just like a man! Then we might not find a house to please us and Hilda would be dissatisfied and suspicious. She might even leave. (*Thoughtfully.*) Of course, I must speak to her before we sign a lease, because I really don't know what I'd

do if Hilda refuses to leave the South Side. (*More cheerfully.*) But there, we won't think about the disagreeable things until everything else is settled.

BOB. That's good American doctrine.

MOLLIE (*warningly and again touching her finger to her lips*). Psst!

(HILDA *enters, left, carrying the meat plates, with a heavy napkin under them. Immediately resuming her monologue.*) I think my last year's hat will do very nicely. You know it rained all last summer and I really only wore the hat a half a dozen times. Perhaps not that often. I can make a few changes on it; put on some new ribbons, you know, and it will do very nicely for another year. You remember that hat, don't you, dear? (BOB *starts to answer, but* MOLLIE *rushes right on.*) Of course you do, you remember you said it was so becoming. That's another reason why I want to wear it this summer.

(HILDA, *meanwhile, puts the plates on the table in front of* BOB *and goes out, left.* MOLLIE *at once stops speaking.*)

BOB (*holding his hands over the plates as over a fire and rubbing them together in genial warmth*). Ah, the good hot plates! She never forgets them. She *is* a gem, Mollie.

MOLLIE (*in great self-satisfaction*). If you are finally convinced of that, after three years, I wish you would be a little bit more careful what you say the next time Hilda comes in the room.

BOB (*in open-mouthed astonishment*). What!

MOLLIE. Well, I don't want Hilda to think we are making plans behind her back.

BOB (*reflectively*). "A man's home is his castle." (*Pauses.*) It's very evident that the Englishman who first said that didn't keep any servants.

(*Telephone bell rings off stage.*)

MOLLIE. Answer that, Bob.

BOB. Won't Hilda answer it?

MOLLIE (*standing up quickly and speaking impatiently*). Very well, I shall answer it myself. I can't ask Hilda to run to the telephone while she is serving the meal.

BOB (*sullenly, as he gets up*). All right! All right!

(*Exit* BOB, *center. As he does so* HILDA *appears at door, left, hurrying to answer the telephone.*)

MOLLIE. Mr. Espenhayne will answer it, Hilda.

(HILDA *makes the slightest possible bow of acquiescence, withdraws left, and in a moment reappears with vegetable dishes and small side dishes which she puts before* MRS. ESPENHAYNE. *She is arranging these when* BOB *re-enters, center.*)

BOB. Somebody for you, Hilda.

HILDA (*surprised*). For me? O! But I cannot answer eet now. Please ask the party to call later.

(HILDA *speaks excellent English but with some Swedish accent. The noticeable feature of her speech is the precision and great care with which she enunciates every syllable.*)

MOLLIE. Just take the number yourself, Hilda, and tell the party you will call back after dinner.

HILDA. Thank you, Meeses Aispenhayne.

(HILDA *exit, center.* BOB *stands watching* HILDA, *as she leaves the room, and then turns and looks at* MOLLIE *with a bewildered expression.*)

BOB (*standing at his chair*). But, I thought Hilda couldn't be running to the telephone while she serves the dinner?

MOLLIE. But this call is for Hilda, herself. That's quite different, you see.

BOB (*slowly and thoughtfully*). O, yes! Of course; I see! (*Sits down in his chair.*) That is——I don't quite see!

MOLLIE (*immediately leaning across the table and speaking in a cautious whisper*). Do you know who it is? (BOB *closes his lips very tightly and nods "Yes" in a very important manner. In the same whisper and very impatiently.*) Who?

BOB (*looking around the room as if to see if anyone is in hiding and then putting his hand to his mouth and exaggerating the whisper*). The Terrible Swede.

MOLLIE (*in her ordinary tone and very much exasperated*). Robert, I've told you a hundred times that you shouldn't refer to—to—the man in that way.

BOB. And I've told you a hundred times to ask Hilda his name. If I knew his name I'd announce him with as much ceremony as if he were the Swedish Ambassador.

MOLLIE (*disgusted*). Oh, don't try to be funny! Suppose some day Hilda hears you speak of him in that manner?

BOB. You know that's mild compared to what you think of him. Suppose some day Hilda learns what you think of him?

MOLLIE. I think very well of him and you know it. Of course, I dread the time when she marries him, but I wouldn't for the world have her think that we speak disrespectfully of her or her friends.

BOB. "A man's home is his castle."

(MOLLIE'S *only answer is a gesture of impatience.* MOLLIE *and* BOB *sit back in their chairs to await* HILDA'S *return. Both sit with fingers interlaced, hands resting on the edge of the table in the attitude of school children at attention. A long pause.* MOLLIE *unclasps her hands and shifts uneasily.* ROBERT *does the same. Mollie, seeing this, hastily resumes her former attitude of quiet waiting.* ROBERT, *however, grows increasingly restless. His restlessness makes* MOLLIE *nervous and she watches* ROBERT, *and when he is not observing her, she darts quick, anxious glances at the door, center.* BOB *drains and refills his glass.*)

MOLLIE (*she has been watching* ROBERT *and every time he shifts or moves she unconsciously does the same and finally she breaks out nervously*). I don't understand this at all! Isn't today Tuesday?

BOB. What of it?

MOLLIE. He usually calls up on Wednesdays and comes to see her on Saturdays.

BOB. And takes her to the theater on Thursdays and to dances on Sundays. He's merely extending his line of attack.

(*Another long pause, then* BOB *begins to experiment to learn whether the plates are still hot. He gingerly touches the edges of the upper plate in two or three places. It seems safe to handle. He takes hold of upper and lower plates boldly, muttering, as he does so,* "Cold as—" *Drops the plates with a clatter and a smothered oath. Shakes his fingers and blows on them. Meanwhile* MOLLIE *is sitting very rigid, regarding* BOB *with a fixed stare and beating a vigorous tattoo on the table cloth with her fingers.* BOB *catches her eye and cringes under her gaze. He drains and refills his glass. He studies the walls and the ceiling of the room, meanwhile still nursing his fingers.* BOB *steals a sidelong glance at* MOLLIE. *She is still staring at him. He turns to his water goblet. Picks it up and holds it up to the light. He rolls the stem between his fingers, squinting at the light through the water. Reciting slowly as he continues to gaze at the light.*) Starlight! Starbright! Will Hilda talk to him all night!

MOLLIE (*in utter disgust*). Oh, stop that singing.

(BOB *puts down his glass, then drinks the water and refills the glass. He then turns his attention to the silverware and cutlery before him. He examines it critically, then lays a teaspoon carefully on the cloth before him, and attempts the trick of picking it up with the first finger in the bowl and the thumb at the point of the handle. After one or two attempts the spoon shoots on the floor, far behind him.* MOLLIE *jumps at the noise.* BOB *turns slowly and looks at the spoon with an injured air, then turns back to* MOLLIE *with a silly, vacuous smile. He now*

lays all the remaining cutlery in a straight row before him.)

BOB (*slowly counting the cutlery and silver, back and forth*). Eeny, meeny, miney, mo. Catch a—(*Stops suddenly as an idea comes to him. Gazes thoughtfully at* MOLLIE *for a moment, then begins to count over again.*) Eeeny, meeny, miney, mo; Hilda's talking to her beau. If we holler, she may go. Eeny, mee—

MOLLIE (*interrupting and exasperated to the verge of tears*). Bob, if you don't stop all that nonsense, I shall scream! (*In a very tense tone.*) I believe I'm going to have one of my sick headaches! (*Puts her hand to her forehead.*) I know it; I can feel it coming on!

BOB (*in a soothing tone*). Hunger, my dear, hunger! When you have a good warm meal you'll feel better.

MOLLIE (*in despair*). What do you suppose I ought to do?

BOB. Go out in the kitchen and fry a couple of eggs.

MOLLIE. Oh! be serious! I'm at my wits end! Hilda never did anything like this before.

BOB (*suddenly quite serious*). What does that fellow do for a living, anyhow?

MOLLIE. How should I know?

BOB. Didn't you ever ask Hilda?

MOLLIE. Certainly not. Hilda doesn't ask me about your business, why should I pry into her affairs?

BOB (*taking out his cigarette case and lighting a cigarette*). Mollie, I see you're strong for the Constitution of the United States.

MOLLIE (*suspiciously*). What do you mean by that?

BOB. The Constitution says: "Whereas it is a self-evident truth that all men are born equal"— (*With a wave of the hand.*) Hilda and you, and the Terrible Swede and I and—

MOLLIE (*interrupting*). Bob, you're such a *heathen! That's not in the Constitution.* That's in the Bible!

BOB. Well, wherever it is, until this evening I never realized what a personage Hilda is.

MOLLIE. You can make fun of me all you please, but I know what's right! Your remarks don't influence me in the least—not in the least!

BOB (*murmurs thoughtfully and feelingly*). How true! (*Abruptly.*) Why don't they get married? Do you know that?

MOLLIE. All I know is that they are waiting until his business is entirely successful so that Hilda won't have to work.

BOB. Well, the Swedes are pretty careful of their money. The chances are Hilda has a neat little nest egg laid by.

MOLLIE (*hesitating and doubtfully*). That's one thing that worries me a little. I think Hilda puts money—into—into—into the young man's business.

BOB (*indignantly*). Do you mean to tell me that this girl gives her money to that fellow and you don't try to find out a thing about him? Who he is or what he does? I suppose she supports the loafer.

MOLLIE (*with dignity*). He's not a loafer. I've seen

him and I've talked with him and I know he's a gentleman.

BOB. Mollie, I'm getting tired of all that kind of drivel. I believe now-a-days women give a good deal more thought to pleasing their maids than they do to pleasing their husbands.

MOLLIE (*demurely*). Well, you know, Bob, your maid can leave you much easier than your husband can (*Pauses thoughtfully.*) and I'm sure she's much harder to replace.

BOB (*very angry, looking at his watch, throwing his napkin on the table, and standing up*). Mollie, our dinner has been interrupted for fifteen minutes while Hilda entertains her (*With sarcasm.*) gentleman friend. If you won't stop it, I will. (*Steps toward the door, center.*)

MOLLIE (*sternly, pointing to* BOB'S *chair*). Robert, sit down!

(BOB *pauses, momentarily, and at the instant* HILDA *enters, center, meeting* BOB, *face to face. Both are startled.* BOB *in a surly manner walks back to his place at the table.* HILDA *follows, excited and eager.* BOB *sits down and* HILDA *stands for a moment at the table, smiling from one to the other and evidently anxious to say something.* BOB *and* MOLLIE *are severe and unfriendly. They gaze at* HILDA *coldly. Slowly* HILDA'S *enthusiasm cools and she becomes again the impassive servant.*)

HILDA. Aixcuse me, Meeses Aispenhayne, I am very sorry. I bring the dinner right in.

(HILDA *exit, left.*)

BOB. It's all nonsense. (*Touches the plates again, but*

HILDA RETURNS FROM THE TELEPHONE

From a production of "Where but in America," given by the Dramatic Club of the Horace Mann School for Boys.

this time even more cautiously than before. This time he finds they are entirely safe to handle.) These plates are stone cold now. (HILDA *enters, left, with meat platter. Places it before* BOB. *He serves the meat and* MOLLIE *starts to serve the vegetables.* HILDA *hands* MOLLIE *her meat plate.*)

MOLLIE. Vegetables?

(BOB *is chewing on his meat and does not answer.* MOLLIE *looks at him inquiringly. But his eyes are on his plate. Repeating.*) Vegetables? (*Still no answer from* BOB. *Very softly under her breath.*) H'mm.

(MOLLIE *helps herself to vegetables and then dishes out a portion which she hands to* HILDA, *who, in turn, places the dish beside* BOB. *When both are served,* HILDA *stands for a moment back of the table. She clasps and unclasps her hands in a nervous manner, seems about to speak, but as* BOB *and* MOLLIE *pay no attention to her she slowly and reluctantly turns, and exit, left.* MOLLIE *takes one or two bites of the meat and then gives a quick glance at* BOB. *He is busy chewing at his meat and* MOLLIE *quietly lays down her knife and fork and turns to the vegetables.*)

BOB (*chewing desperately on his meat*). Tenderloin, I believe?

MOLLIE (*sweetly*). Yes, dear.

BOB (*imitating* MOLLIE *a moment back*). H'mm! (*He takes one or two more hard bites.*) Mollie, I have an idea.

MOLLIE. I'm relieved.

BOB (*savagely*). Yes, you will be when you hear it. When we get that builder's name from Fanny Russell,

we'll tell him that instead of a garage, which we don't need, he can build a special telephone booth off the kitchen. Then while Hilda serves the dinner—

(BOB *stops short, as* HILDA *bursts in abruptly, left, and comes to the table.*)

HILDA. Aixcuse me, Meeses Aispenhayne, I am so excited.

MOLLIE (*anxiously*). Is anything wrong, Hilda?

HILDA (*explosively*). Meeses Aispenhayne, Meester Leendquist he say you want to move to Highland Park.

(BOB *and* MOLLIE *simultaneously drop their knives and forks and look at* HILDA *in astonishment and wonder.*)

MOLLIE. What?

BOB. Who?

HILDA (*repeats very rapidly*). Meester Leendquist, he say you look for house on North Shore!

MOLLIE (*utterly overcome at* HILDA'S *knowledge and at a loss for words of denial*). We move to the North Shore? How ridiculous! Hilda, where did you get such an idea? (*Turns to* ROBERT.) Robert, did you ever hear anything so laughable? (*She forces a strained laugh.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

(ROBERT *has been looking at* HILDA *in dumb wonder. At* MOLLIE'S *question he turns to her in startled surprise. He starts to answer, gulps, swallows hard, and then coughs violently. Very sharply, after waiting a moment for* BOB *to answer.*) Robert Espenhayne, will you stop that coughing and answer me!

BOB (*between coughs and drinking a glass of water*).

Egh! Egh! Excuse me! Something, egh! egh! stuck in my throat.

MOLLIE (*turning to* HILDA). Some day we might want to move north, Hilda, but not now! Oh, no, not now!

BOB. Who told you that, Hilda?

HILDA. Meester Leendquist.

MOLLIE (*puzzled*). Who is Mr. Lindquist?

HILDA (*surprised*). Meester Leendquist—(*Pauses, a trifle embarrassed.*) Meester Lindquist ees young man who just speak to me on telephone. He come to see me every Saturday.

BOB. Oh, Mr. Lindquist, the—the—Ter—

MOLLIE (*interrupting frantically, and waving her hands at* BOB). Yes, yes, of course. You know—Mr. Lindquist! (BOB *catches himself just in time and* MOLLIE *settles back with a sigh of relief, then turns to* HILDA *with a puzzled air.*) But where did Mr. Lindquist get such an idea?

HILDA. Meeses Russell tell heem so.

MOLLIE (*now entirely bewildered*). What Mrs. Russell?

HILDA. Meeses Russell—your friend.

MOLLIE (*more and more at sea*). Mrs. Edwin Russell who comes to see me—every now and then?

HILDA. Yes.

MOLLIE. But how does Mrs. Russell know Mr. Lindquist and why should she tell Mr. Lindquist that we expected to move to the North Shore?

HILDA. Meester Leendquist, he build Meeses Rus-

sell's house. That ees hees business. He build houses on North Shore and he sell them and rent them.

(BOB *and* MOLLIE *look at each other and at* HILDA *in wonder and astonishment as the situation slowly filters into their brains. A long pause.*)

BOB (*in awe and astonishment*). You mean that Mr. Lindquist, the young man who comes to see you every —every—every now and then—is the same man who put up the Russell house?

HILDA. Yes, Meester Aispenhayne.

BOB (*slowly*). And when Mrs. Espenhayne (*Points to* MOLLIE.) wrote to Mrs. Russell (*Jerks his thumb to indicate the north.*) Mrs. Russell told Mr. Lindquist (*Jerks his thumb in opposite direction.*) and Mr. Lindquist telephoned to you? (*Points to* HILDA.)

HILDA. Yes, Meester Aispenhayne. (*Nodding.*)

BOB (*very thoughtfully and slowly*). H'mm! (*Then slowly resuming his meal and speaking in mock seriousness, in subtle jest at* MOLLIE, *and imitating her tone of a moment or two back.*) But, of course, you understand, Hilda, we don't want to move to the North Shore now! Oh, no, not now!

HILDA (*somewhat crestfallen*). Yes, Meester Aispenhayne.

BOB (*reflectively*). But, of course, if Mr. Lindquist builds houses, we might look. Yes, we might look.

HILDA (*in growing confidence and enthusiasm*). Yes, Meester Aispenhayne, and he build such beautiful houses and so cheap. He do so much heemself. Hees father was carpenter and he work hees way through

Uneeversity of Mennesota and study architecture and then he go to Uneeversity of Eelenois and study landscape gardening and now he been in business for heemself sex years. And oh, Meeses Aispenhayne, you must see hees own home! You will love eet, eet ees so beautiful. A little house, far back from the road. You can hardly see eet for the trees and the shrubs, and een the summer the roses grow all around eet. Eet is just like the picture book!

MOLLIE (*in the most perfunctory tone, utterly without interest or enthusiasm*). How charming! (*Pauses thoughtfully, then turns to* HILDA *anxiously.*) Then I suppose, Hilda, if we should decide to move up to the North Shore you would go with us?

HILDA (*hesitatingly*). Yes, Meeses Aispenhayne. (*Pauses.*) But I theenk I must tell you thees spring Meester Leendquist and I aixpect to get married. Meester Leendquist's business ees very good. (*With a quick smile and a glance from one to the other.*) You know, I am partner with heem. I put all my money een Meester Leendquist's business, too. (MOLLIE *and* BOB *gaze at each other in complete resignation and surrender.*)

BOB (*quite seriously after a long pause*). Hilda, I don't know whether we will move north or not, but the next time Mr. Lindquist comes here, I want you to introduce me to him. I'd like to know him. You ought to be very proud of a man like that.

HILDA (*radiant with pleasure*). Thank you, Meester Aispenhayne.

MOLLIE. Yes, indeed, Hilda, Mr. Espenhayne has often said what a fine young man Mr. Lindquist seems to be. We want to meet him, and Mr. Espenhayne and I will talk about the house and then we will speak to Mr. Lindquist. (*Then weakly.*) Of course, we didn't expect to move north for a long time, but of course, if you expect to get married, and Mr. Lindquist builds houses—

(*Her voice dies out. Long pause.*)

HILDA. Thank you, Meeses Aispenhayne, I tell Meester Leendquist.

(HILDA *stands at the table a moment longer, then slowly turns and moves toward door, left.* BOB *and* MOLLIE *watch her and as she moves away from the table,* BOB *turns to* MOLLIE. *At this moment* HILDA *stops, turns suddenly, and returns to the table.*)

HILDA. Oh, Meeses Aispenhayne, I forget one theeng!

MOLLIE. What now, Hilda?

HILDA. Meester Leendquist say eef you and Meester Aispenhayne want to look at property on North Shore, I shall let heem know and he meet you at station weeth hees automobile.

CURTAIN

NOTES

These notes contain suggestions about production, in the belief that a play must be approached from that viewpoint if it is to be considered as a play. This should be the angle of approach whether the play is to have some sort of classroom presentation, or whether it is to be produced merely in the minds of the students.

For any real production of most of the plays in this book the permission of the author or the publisher is necessary, and often the payment of royalty. They are printed here for classroom use only, and no other use is authorized.

The Dark of the Dawn

The author of this stirring little play calls it a "martial interlude," and that is an ideal name for it. The characters are described in detail in the stage directions, but notice how cleverly and carefully the author brings out the atmosphere: war, the coldness of the morning, and so on. All these things are important in the development of the story. This is an ideal play to study in order to see how a plot is treated by a clever dramatist. Everything that happens is prepared for, and yet nothing is too obvious.

Other one-act plays by the same author, treating of similar stirring incidents, may be found in Miss Dix's *Allison's Lad, and Other Martial Interludes*. Especially to be recommended are "Allison's Lad" and "The Captain of the Gate," but all of these little plays are very effective.

Beulah Marie Dix is the author of many stories and romances, and of several successful long plays, several of them in collaboration with Evelyn G. Sutherland. At present she lives in Hollywood, where she is engaged in writing for the moving pictures.

The Maker of Dreams

This play depends very much on its fanciful and unreal atmosphere. It must be played so that this is brought out. Pierrot and Pierrette are both unreal creatures, and there are many mysterious things about the Manufacturer. The actors must make us realize this.

Pierrot is a character of some antiquity. He is supposed to have originated in the old Italian masked comedy, which was very popular in Italy by 1600. Each play of this sort contained the same characters in new situations. The scenario of the action of each play was written, and the actors memorized the action only, inventing their lines as they went along. The dupe and villain was usually a character called Pantaloon, the ancestor of our modern clown. There were often two sets of lovers, Pierrot and Pierrette, and Harlequin and Columbine. Another old friend who often appeared was the hunchback, Punchinello—the Punch of "Punch and Judy." These characters were taken over by the French actors, and they became very popular in early French pantomime. From France they were carried over into England.

Pierrot, Pierrette, Harlequin, Columbine, and the others are very popular figures in the modern one-act play. Pierrot often has the same character that he has in "The Maker of Dreams"; he is the dreamer, never satisfied, always searching. He has almost become a symbol for youth. In some plays, however, the characters are reversed; Pierrette is the fickle, and Pierrot, the constant lover.

You will find an interesting account of these characters in *The History of the Harlequinade*, by Maurice Sand. Among the many modern short plays in which they appear are "Aria da Capo" by Edna St. Vincent Millay, "The Wonder Hat" by Ben Hecht and Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, "Au Claire du Lune" by Edgar Wolf, "Columbine" by Reginald Arkell, "The Pierrot of the Minute" by Ernest Dowson, and "Pantaloon" by James M. Barrie. They also appear in some long plays, as *The Harlequinade* by Granville Barker and Dion Clayton Calthrop, and *Prunella* by Laurence Housman.

Oliphant Down, the author of "The Maker of Dreams," was a promising young English dramatist. He was killed in battle at Havrincourt Wood, on May 23, 1917, at the age of thirty-two. This play was written in 1911, and met with immediate success. It has been constantly performed in Little Theaters and in schools. Of Mr. Down's other plays, the most often played is a little farce called "The Quod Wrangle."

A Night at an Inn

This play is very effective when produced because it appeals so marvellously to the dread of the mysterious and the unknown. Although one line suggests that the time is afternoon, night is probably better, with the dingy room of the old inn lighted by a few candles. Klesh can be made more imposing in the semi-darkness, so perhaps all but one of the candles may be put out in the action just before he enters. Klesh must be made a huge, grotesque figure, and he can be illuminated, where it is possible to secure light effects, by a weird green light. He must enter slowly and gropingly, and fumble around for his eye. After he puts it in his head, he can see; and so he goes out in a different manner.

In one performance the "ruby" consisted of a small electric light bulb, which Klesh took up and screwed into a socket in his forehead, where it began to glow in the semi-darkness like the wonderful eye the ruby is supposed to be. In this performance Klesh's costume was made on a wire frame, and he wore weights on his feet. As the frightened sailors sat around the table in the awful silence broken only by the sobs of Sniggers, the heavy footsteps of Klesh could be heard slowly approaching the inn. The effect was tremendous.

The actor who plays the part of the Toff has the difficult task of portraying the clever rogue who was once a gentleman. He should be distinguished from the rough sailors who are his companions, by his smooth and careful speech, as well as by his dress.

The play should not be done too rapidly. There must be pauses between the various incidents, especially at the end where the sailors are called out one by one, to give the audience time to imagine the horrible deed that is being done outside, which the Toff "did not foresee."

Lord Dunsany, an Irish nobleman of an ancient family, is one of the best known members of the Irish literary movement. Early noted for his stories and fables, he was over thirty when his first play, "The Glittering Gate," was produced at the Abbey Theater, Dublin, in 1909. A splendid series of highly imaginative plays followed. Many of them were produced in America by Stuart Walker, in 1916, and Dunsany immediately became immensely popular with the Little Theaters.

"Something must be wrong," says Dunsany, "with an age whose drama deserts romance." Certainly, his own plays are the very essence of romance. Another famous Irish writer,

Padriac Colum, says truly that Dunsany s attitude is one of "unrelenting hostility to everything that impoverishes man's imagination—to mean cities, to commercial interests, to a culture that arises out of material organization. He dwells forever upon things that arouse the imagination—upon swords and cities, upon temples and palaces, upon slaves in their revolt and kings in their unhappiness. He has the mind of a myth-maker, and he can give ships and cities and whirlpools vast and proper shapes."

You will undoubtedly enjoy Lord Dunsany's ability to create strange lands and gods and kings, not only in his books of plays, *Five Plays* and *Plays of Gods and Men*, but in his books of stories and myths, *The Gods of Pegana*, *Time and the Gods*, *The Book of Wonder*, *A Dreamer's Tale*, and others.

The Brink of Silence

This play is another dramatic episode, but notice that the drama here is internal. It consists of Cole's struggle with himself. An actor who cannot explain Cole to us will cause the play to lose most of its effectiveness. He should be able to portray Cole's stoicism in the face of his longing to go back to his old life, his determination and calmness, contrasted with the fretfulness of Macready, his astonishment and wild delight when he sees his son appear and when he learns that his son has accomplished the task he himself started many years before, and his brave decision to remain unknown in the silence he has learned to love.

The writer of this play, Miss Esther E. Galbraith, has written for the newspapers and for various magazines. She was a member of a playwriting group of "The Drama League Players" of Washington, D. C., each member of which was to develop the Enoch Arden situation in some new and original form. (See Tennyson's "Enoch Arden.") "The Brink of Silence," Miss Galbraith's working out of the assignment, was considered the best, and it was produced in 1917 by "The Drama League Players," with great success.

The Rising of the Moon

There are two important characters in this play, the Sergeant and the Ragged Man. Each of these parts gives an opportunity for a clever actor. The play is a struggle between them. Will the Ragged Man succeed in his attempt to appeal to the Sergeant's recollection of his youthful tendencies toward the revo-

lution, or will the Sergeant's desire for the hundred pounds win out? The Sergeant must be able to portray this struggle with himself, as he stands, at the climax of the play, with the hat and wig of the false Ballad Singer behind his back, when the other policemen return. The Ragged Man should have one of those whimsical winning personalities that makes his victory over the Sergeant convincing to the audience! He must be so irresistible as to prove that his escape from gaol is no mystery, because it is obvious that he was able to talk his way out. It is this gift of winning people over to his side that makes him so dangerous to "the law."

If any attempt is made to use dialect in this play, the brogue should be very light. It is the queer word order and the delightfully piquant twist to the sentences that will carry the feeling of the play.

The author, Lady Gregory, is one of the best known of the Irish playwrights. With the great Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, and several other literary people, she founded the Abbey Theater, in Dublin, about twenty-five years ago. This was one of the first and most important groups in the Little Theater movement. For them she wrote this little play and many other equally delightful ones, with which you may wish to become familiar. Most of them are contained in her two volumes: *Seven Short Plays* and *New Irish Comedies.*

The music for the songs in this play will be found on pages 261–264

The Silver Lining

The actors in this play must try to reflect the artificial manners of the eighteenth century—or rather, the polished manners of the eighteenth century, which we consider rather artificial. Fanny is the " new woman " of her time; she dares to write a book—and to sell it!—contrary to the commands of her elders and betters. She has a sense of humor, but she breaks into tears when her uncle reproaches her, which may be taken to prove that she is not a twentieth century " new woman." Her uncle, Richard, must be played seriously and pompously. Notice his calm assumption that the money Fanny has received—the silver lining to the disgrace of having a female novelist in the family—is the property of Fanny's father.

The play is based on a historical literary incident, although history does not record the actual interview portrayed by the play. Perhaps you may enjoy becoming acquainted with the

Diary of Madame D'Arblay. (Fanny married a Frenchman, General D'Arblay.) "This year" (1778), she writes, making fun of herself, "was ushered in by a grand and most important event. At the latter end of January the literary world was favored with the first publication of the ingenious, learned, and most profound Fanny Burney."

Miss Mackay, the writer of this play, has treated the little incident with just the proper lightness of touch. The verse form tends to establish the delightful and fanciful atmosphere that helps carry the incident. Other plays by the same author, with a similar atmosphere, may be found in *The Beau of Bath, and Other Eighteenth Century Comedies.* Miss Mackay has written many volumes of plays for children, and several well-known works on amateur play production, in addition to her other one-act plays.

The Turtle Dove

This is another play of atmosphere. It is an interesting example of a theatrical tradition different from our own, where the audience must help act the play by imagining the settings. Chinese students declare that this is not really Chinese, but the important thing is that it seems foreign and delightful to us.

All the actors should develop mannerisms that will help to carry the atmosphere, such as exaggerated gestures and deep Oriental bows. Kwen-lin may assume the toddling walk of a Chinese woman with bound feet. The Property Man has an excellent part, although he does not say a word. He must be excessively bored by the entire performance, yet he must not forget to have the properties in the proper place at the proper time. Also, he must be careful not to overdo his part, and not to attract attention to himself at moments when important action is taking place. The Chorus should have a pleasing voice and a suave, impressive manner.

Action brings out the climax of this play as mere reading cannot. Chang's despair, his attempt to kill himself with the knife, and afterwards to leap into the river, are only indicated on the printed page; they assume their proper importance only when well acted.

The author, Margaret Scott Oliver, has written several other plays, most of which were produced by "The Rose Valley Players," a famous Little Theater group in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania. She suggests for Chang's song the music on page 264.

The Romancers

This play is but the first act of a three-act play, but it is complete by itself. In the opinions of some critics, this first act is better artistically than the longer play. Perhaps the subject is too light and too artificial to hold an audience for a full evening. In any case, the first act is complete in itself, and makes a very delightful short play.

It is another play of atmosphere, and it is usually played in the costumes of the eighteenth century, with embroidered coats, breeches and silk stockings, white wigs, and so forth.

The characters are obvious from their parts. Percinet and Sylvette are very romantic, of course. The two fathers must be differentiated from one another by the actors. One may be played as older than the other, and they must develop distinctive mannerisms and gestures. Straforel has the splendid part of a professional swordsman, and he may swagger and pose to his heart's content.

The author, Edmond Rostand (1868–1918), is one of the best modern French dramatists. His most famous plays are *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *L'Aiglon*, and *Chantecler*.

Pyramus and Thisbe

This little play, as is explained on page 9, is made by combining certain scenes from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The scenes are: Act I, Scene 2 to line 89; Act III, Scene 1, from line 9 to line 75; Act V, Scene 1, from line 108 to line 345, with the omission of the lines spoken by the serious characters in the play, before whom "Pyramus and Thisbe" is being presented.

This play is a farce. A farce is, in a dramatic sense, a variety of comedy in which absurd and laughable situations are produced with little regard for the probability of the events or the naturalness of the characters.

In playing a farce, the actors must remember that they will be more successful if they play their parts seriously. There is an unfortunate tendency, which is often exemplified on the professional stage, to act foolish in a farce. The play is always twice as funny to the audience if the actors resist this temptation and play their parts seriously, just as though they did not realize that there was anything comical in what they were doing.

Page 168. Condole. Probably a blunder for some word, but it is impossible to say what.

Ercles. Bottom's version of Hercules.

To tear a cat in. A proverbial expression meaning "to rant violently."

To make all split. Another proverbial expression denoting violent action. It originated with sailors; a violent storm makes all the sails split.

Phibbus. Phœbus, in the language of Bottom.

Page 170. Aggravate. Bottom means just the opposite, of course.

By'r lakin'. By our little Lady; that is, the Virgin Mary.

Parlous. Perilous.

Page 171. Eight and six. The common ballad meter of the time, consisting of alternate lines of eight and six syllables.

Page 173. Prologue. Quince rather spoils the possible effect of the Prologue by his original method of delivery, indicated by the punctuation. Punctuate it correctly so that it makes sense.

Page 174. This man, with lanthorn, dog, etc. To the Elizabethans, the man in the moon appeared to carry a faggot of wood, and to be accompanied by a dog.

Ninus. An ancient king, the supposed founder of Nineveh.

Page 177. Limander. A blunder for Leander, a famous lover, who swam the Hellespont, according to the story, to meet his sweetheart, Hero.

Helen. A blunder, probably, for Hero.

Shafalus to Procrus. Another blunder, for Cephalus and Procris. Cephalus remained true to his wife, Procris, in spite of of the fact that he was loved by a goddess, Aurora.

Page 180. Thrum. The loose end of the warp in a weaver's loom. The warp consists of the long threads that run lengthwise in a loom.

A Comedie Royall

This play is an interesting example of a delayed exposition. The curtain rises on a dramatic situation, Queen Elizabeth berating a group of courtiers, while one of her ladies in waiting stands near in tears. Thus the audience is made curious to learn what has caused the situation.

The characters are made very clear in the play. Queen Elizabeth is portrayed as the domineering, quick-tempered, and keen-witted woman that history describes. Phyllida is perhaps rather too truly described by Elizabeth as a "baby sheep." Notice how little she seems to understand of what is going on around her. She makes Royall's task of saving his head very difficult. Royall must be a handsome, clever young blade; and his father is a portly, quick-tempered old soldier. Sir Edward and Lord Mortimer must be distinguished from one another mainly by their make-ups, or perhaps by some slight affectations. For instance, one might lisp slightly.

The author, Mrs. Sutherland, was burned to death in a tragic fire, in 1908. She had written a number of successful longer plays, among them *The Rose of Plymouth Town*, and (in collaboration with Beulah Marie Dix) *The Road to Yesterday*, and (in collaboration with Booth Tarkington) *Monsieur Beaucaire*.

The Falcon

This play is the retelling of an old story. In its earliest form it appeared in Sanskrit, an old Eastern language now no longer spoken. Boccaccio, a famous Italian writer who lived early in the Renaissance, retells it in his *Decameron*, Fifth Day, Ninth Tale. Longfellow is one of the many modern writers who retell the story, "The Falcon of Ser Federigo" in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. (See page 277).

Tennyson has introduced humor in the old nurse, Elisabetta, and in Filippo. Both of these characters should be played in a rough peasant vein. Both are sharp-tongued and outspoken, but full of love and loyalty to the Count. The Count is very much the Italian gentleman, with charming manners and noble bearing. Lady Giovanna should be very beautiful and attractive, to convince the audience of the plausibility of the Count's love.

Tennyson (1809–1892), the great English poet, wrote several long plays, most of them on historical subjects. They were played with much success, both in England and America, on the professional stage, some of them by the great actor Sir Henry Irving. But "The Falcon" is his only one-act play. It was written in 1879, and was played at the St. James Theater in London in the December of the same year, by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, two well-known actors. It ran sixty-seven nights.

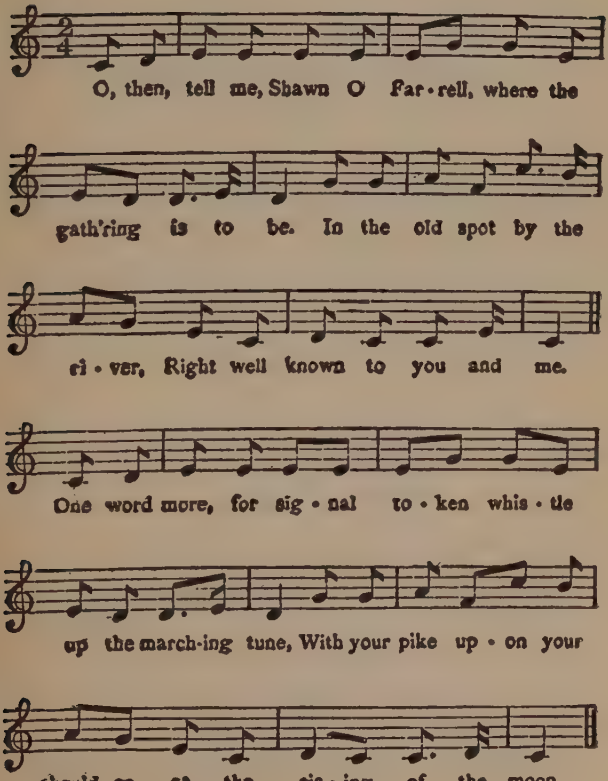
Where but in America

A boy once said that this was the most American play he ever read, "because it deals with the servant problem and real estate." It is certainly a most clever presentation of these two subjects.

The author suggests that in putting on the play the pantomime and business be very carefully worked out, and played up as much as possible, especially in the scene where Mollie and Bob are waiting at the table while Hilda is at the telephone. He says, "Good pantomime makes for a finished production, and I think you will find that in this play especially, the audience enjoys the pantomime quite as much as the spoken lines."

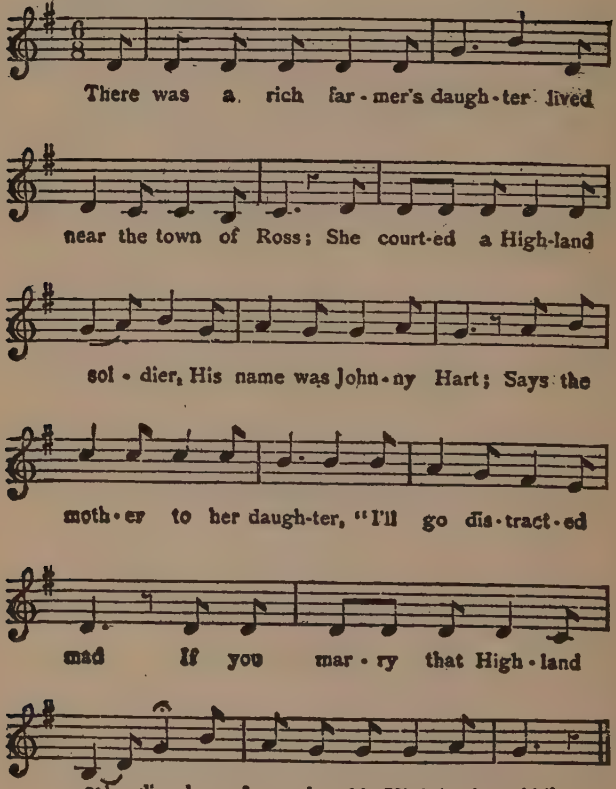
The author, Oscar M. Wolff, is a successful Chicago lawyer, who has some law books and articles to his credit, as well as several other one-act plays. This play was first produced by "The Players Workshop," a Little Theater group in Chicago.

THE RISING OF THE MOON


O, then, tell me, Shawn O' Far-rell, where the
gath'ring is to be. In the old spot by the
ri-ver, Right well known to you and me.
One word more, for sig-nal to-ken whis-tle
up the march-ing tune, With your pike up-on your
should-er at the ris-ing of the moon.

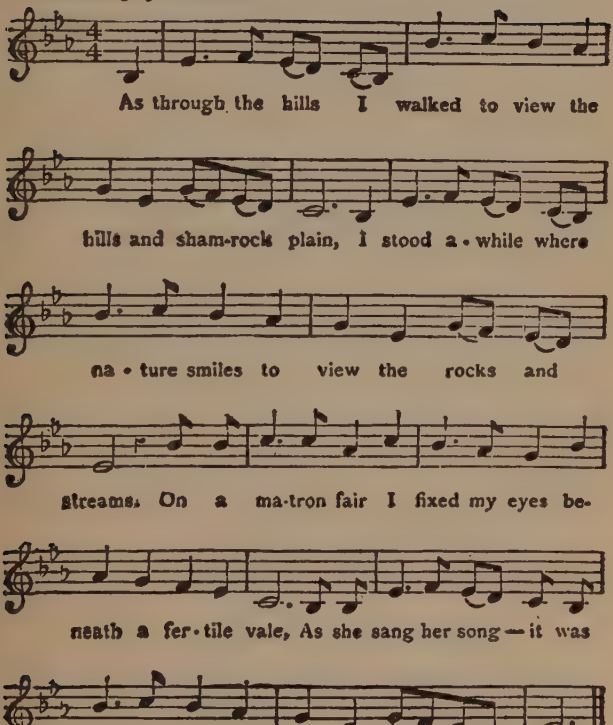
JOHNNY HART

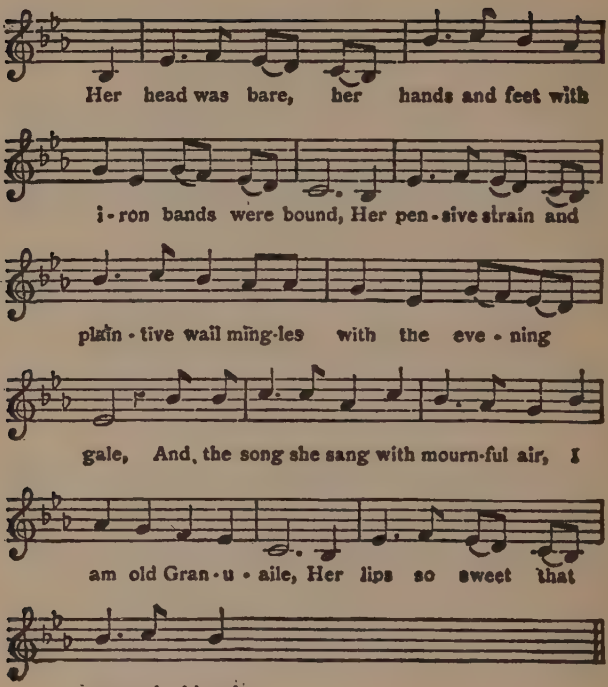
The Rising of the Moon.


There was a rich far-mer's daugh-ter lived
near the town of Ross; She court-ed a High-land
sol-dier, His name was John-ny Hart; Says the
moth-er to her daugh-ter, "I'll go dis-tract-ed
mad If you mar-ry that High-land
sol-dier dressed up in his High-land plaid."

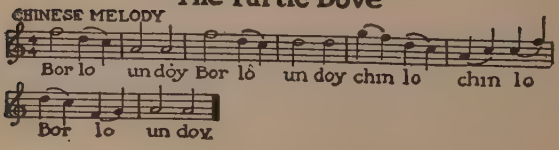
GRANUAILE

The Rising of the Moon.


As through the hills I walked to view the
hills and sham-rock plain, I stood a-while where
na-ture smiles to view the rocks and
streams. On a ma-tron fair I fixed my eyes be-
neath a fer-tile vale, As she sang her song — it was
on the wrong of poor old Gran-u-aile.


Her head was bare, her hands and feet with
i-ron bands were bound, Her pen-sive strain and
plain-tive wail ming-les with the eve-ning
gale, And, the song she sang with mourn-ful air, I
am old Gran-u-aile, Her lips so sweet that
mon-archs kissed

The Turtle Dove



QUESTIONS

1. Why does Tollocho, in "The Dark of the Dawn," hate the Count von Mandersperg?

2. In "The Dark of the Dawn," what is the relation of the title to the play? Explain the various ways in which it is applicable.

3. What is the purpose of the bow that Pierrette discovers in the pocket of the Manufacturer in "The Maker of Dreams"? Are there any other speeches or actions in the play that make you think the Manufacturer is sometimes known by another name?

4. What is the theme, or underlying idea, of "The Maker of Dreams"? Compare it with the idea of Maeterlinck's *Bluebird.* Do you know of any other plays or stories built around the same theme?

5. In "A Night at an Inn," what has been the story of the sailors and the ruby before their arrival at the inn?

6. What incidents, in the same play, are left to the imagination of the readers or the audience? Do you think anything could have been created to be performed on the stage that would have been as effective as the things the audience will imagine?

7. Just what does the Toff mean by his last words, "I did not foresee it"? What are some of the different ways in which the actor could say this line?

8. Which do you consider more important in "The Brink of Silence," the things that happen on the stage, or the portrayal of Cole's state of mind?

9. What are the various states of mind that Cole goes through?

10. By what devices does the author of "The Rising of the Moon" build up our interest in the escaped prisoner?

11. To what emotions in the Sergeant does the Ragged Man appeal?

12. What is the meaning of the title in connection with the incident portrayed in "The Silver Lining?"

13. Does the verse form of "The Silver Lining" aid or hinder the building up of the atmosphere? Explain.

14. What is the climax of "The Turtle Dove"? What events lead up to it?

15. What is the plot devised by the fathers in "The Romancers"?

16. What is a *farce?* Why is "Pyramus and Thisbe" a farce?

17. Make a list of words used incorrectly for some other similar word by the characters in "Pyramus and Thisbe."

18. What elements in the plots of "Pyramus and Thisbe" and "The Romancers" are similar?

19. What is the incident that has caused the rage of Elizabeth at the rising of the curtain in "A Comedie Royall"? Would the play be better if we actually saw this first incident?

20. Is the device used in the opening of "A Comedie Royall"—the disclosure of an interesting situation, and

the later explanation of its cause—common in the short story? Give some examples of it.

21. In the same play, how much of the situation does Elizabeth really understand after Royall's confession that his expression of his love for her had been a comedy?

22. In "The Falcon," by what steps is the love story of Ser Federigo and Lady Giovanna unfolded to the audience?

23. What is the story of Federigo, retold in chronological order?

24. How does the author of "Where but in America" prepare for the last speech in the play and make it effective?

25. A "master gesture" is some movement that the actor does over and over again, so that you begin to associate it with him. For instance, Straforel in "The Romancers" may twist his mustache fiercely, or the Mandarin in "The Turtle Dove" may cross his arms in his sleeves when he is not using his hands in any other way. The "master gesture" is a good device to keep in mind, although it must not be overdone. What are good "master gestures" for some of the characters in the plays in this book?

APPENDIX A

Reading One-Act Plays

It is to be hoped that your study of the one-act plays in this book will make you want to read many other plays. Therefore, a list of some of the more recent volumes is added below. If you do not find any of these books in the school library or in the public library, there are other ways of getting them. You might give a public performance of two or three of the plays you have studied, and devote the proceeds to buying collections of plays. Or the class might be divided into groups of five or six students, each group making itself responsible for securing one book which may be passed around to other students. If you really care to do so, you will certainly find some way of building up a good library of one-act plays.

Sometimes it is interesting and instructive to read several plays by the same author. The second list below will give you some suggestions as to the best-known writers of short plays, but no list of that sort can be long complete, for every day sees the appearance of new books and new authors.

There are many ways in which individual students can attempt to interest other members of the class in plays. Here are a few methods which have been successfully tried.

1. Write a *review* of the play, to be read to other members of the class. You will find many models of reviews, both good models and bad models, in current papers and magazines. Remember that a good review must contain two elements: (*a*) some information about the play, and (*b*) your opinion of the play. If either element is missing, the review will be incomplete. Of course, you must not give so much information that the reader will not want to read the play, but you must give enough to show that your opinion is correct. In addition, your review should be correctly and interestingly written.

2. Make a *poster* advertising the play you have read. Although the poster will probably contain only a few words about the play, or a few lines at most, you must take time to think of the best words, so that whoever sees the poster will want to know more about the play it advertises. Perhaps you can make your poster especially attractive by some sort of drawing or illustration.

3. Write a *blurb* for the play. A "blurb" is a publisher's notice, such as would appear on the paper jacket on the outside of a book. It must be much shorter than a review, but it may contain more information than can be given on a poster. Probably it will contain fifty or sixty words. Its purpose is, of

course, to make the person who happens to pick up the book in a store want to read it.

4. Make a *catalogue card* for the play. If the class adopts some regular form of card, and makes a card for each play read by every member of the class, a very valuable and useful catalogue may be made. Perhaps, however, each student will prefer to make his own catalogue of all the plays he has read. The following form of card has been found useful:

Name of Play.....
Author.....
Found in.....
Publisher.....Price.....
Remarks.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
Reported by.....

There are probably many other methods of arousing interest which will occur to you. The important thing is that each member of the class should have an opportunity to report what he has liked, and to defend his opinions. Reading and reporting on one-act plays should be an interesting procedure.

A. Books of Selected One-Act Plays

Clark, B. H. *Representative One-Act Plays by British and Irish Authors.* (20)[1] Little, Brown and Company.

Cohen, H. L. *One-Act Plays by Modern Authors.* (16) Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Carolina Folk Plays. (5) Written by students of the University of North Carolina. Henry Holt and Company.

Harvard Dramatic Club, Plays of (2 vols. of 4 plays each), and *Plays of the 47 Workshop* (3 vols. of 4 plays each). Written by students of Harvard University. Brentano's.

Knickerbocker, E. V. *Plays for Classroom Interpretation.* (7) Henry Holt and Company.

Leonard, S. A. *The Atlantic Book of Modern Plays.* (15) Houghton Mifflin Company.

Lewis, B. R. *Contemporary One-Act Plays.* (18) Charles Scribner's Sons.

Mayorga, M. G. *Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors.* (24) Little, Brown and Company.

Moses, M. J. *Representative One-Act Plays by Continental Authors.* (20) Little, Brown and Company.

Shay, F. and Loving, P. *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays.* Steward, Kidd and Company.

[1] Number of plays in the volume.

SMITH, A. B. *Short Plays by Representative Authors.* (12) The Macmillan Company.

WEBBER, J. P. and WEBSTER, H. H. *One-Act Plays for Secondary Schools.* (18) Houghton Mifflin Company.

Wisconsin Plays. (3) Written by members of the University of Wisconsin. B. W. Huebsch, Inc.

B. BOOKS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS BY INDIVIDUAL DRAMATISTS

ALDIS, MARY. *Plays for Small Stages.* Duffield and Company.

BARRIE, J. M. *Half Hours.* Charles Scribner's Sons.

BROWN, ALICE. *One-Act Plays.* The Macmillan Company.

DIX, BEULAH M. *Allison's Lad, and Other Martial Interludes.* Henry Holt and Company.

DUNSANY, LORD. *Five Plays.* Little, Brown and Company. *Plays of Gods and Men.* John W. Luce and Company.

GALSWORTHY, JOHN. *The Little Man, and Other Satires.* Charles Scribner's Sons.

GREGORY, LADY AUGUSTA. *Seven Short Plays* and *New Irish Comedies.* G. P. Putnam's Sons.

HOUGHTON, STANLEY. *Five One-Act Plays.* Samuel French and Company.

KREYMBERG, ALFRED. *Plays for Poem Mimes.* The Other Press.

MACKAY, CONSTANCE D'ARCY. *The Beau of Bath, and Other One-Act Plays.* Henry Holt and Company.

MACKAYE, PERCY. *Yankee Fantasies.* Duffield and Company.

MIDDLETON, GEORGE. *Embers, and Other One-Act Plays; Possession, and Other One-Act Plays;* and *Tradition, and Other One-Act Plays.* Henry Holt and Company.

MOELLER, PHILIP. *Five Somewhat Historical Plays.* Alfred A. Knopf.

O'NEILL, EUGENE G. *The Moon of the Caribbees, and Six Other Plays of the Sea.* Boni and Liveright. *Thirst, and Other One-Act Plays.* Gorham Press.

PHILLPOTS, EDEN. *Curtain-Raisers.* Brentano's.

TCHEKOFF, ANTON. *Plays, Series II.* Charles Scribner's Sons.

WALKER, STUART. *Portmanteau Plays* and *More Portmanteau Plays.* Stewart, Kidd and Company.

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APPENDIX B

Writing One-Act Plays

In writing one-act plays, it is very important to keep in mind that the play must have a climax, or a point. One of the greatest faults of many of the plays written by high school students is that they are mere dialogues. In a good play the audience must be excited about something; the leading character must be trying to do something, or to prevent somebody else from doing something. This "something" may be external or internal: that is, it may be a material incident or a mental decision. If the hero is trying to get a job, that is a material incident; if he is making up his mind whether or not to tell a secret, that is a mental decision. But in any case, the play must move toward some point. You must create some suspense in your exposition by bringing out a problem that you solve at the climax.

Another thing to be kept in mind is that the play is to be both seen and heard. You must see how the characters look as they move through the play, and hear how their remarks will sound when spoken. You must indicate stage directions clearly, and often you may wish to indicate how lines are to be said, so that

when your play is performed it will be done as you wish it to be done. Notice how directions are given in the plays printed in this volume. The mechanical form is important. Usually stage directions are printed in italics, which should be indicated in manuscript by underlining.

The choice of a title is important, too. A good title should make one want to read and to see the play. It may also help to explain the play, or it may make the point clearer. Notice the aptness of "Where but in America" and "The Silver Lining." Therefore, constantly keep in mind these three points:

(1) The play must have a point or climax which is usually the solution of some problem explained in the exposition.

(2) The action must be indicated, as well as the words.

(3) The title is a very important part of a good play.

Here are a few suggestions for plays. It is often amusing to have several members of a class, or even the entire class, start with the same idea. The resulting plays are usually very different.

1. Arrange a short play from Shakespeare by combining the scenes of one thread of plot. See "Pyramus and Thisbe" on page 167, which is made by combining the scenes that center around Bottom and his friends in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* (Note, page 257.) You might make a love story by selecting scenes from *The Merchant of Venice* or *Much Ado about Nothing* or

The Tempest. Good short comedies may be made out of the Dogberry scenes in *Much Ado,* the Gobbo scenes in *The Merchant of Venice,* or the Falstaff scenes in either part of *Henry IV.* Many other possibilities will occur to the student of Shakespeare.

Be sure to build a climax into the play. In "Pyramus and Thisbe" the climax is the performance of the play, which Bottom and his friends hope will be a great success, but which we see as a failure. It is best to insert stage directions to help the actors interpret their parts. Many helpful suggestions will be found in Chapter II of *Shakespeare for Community Players* by Roy Mitchell.

2. Dramatize a story or a poem. See "The Falcon" on page 205, and compare it with Longfellow's version of the same story, "The Falcon of Ser Federigo" in *Tales of a Wayside Inn.* The story is very old, having been traced back to Sanskrit, an ancient Eastern language now no longer spoken. It appears in several medieval books, and both Tennyson and Longfellow took their plot from Boccaccio's *Decameron,* Fifth Day, Ninth Tale. Notice the differences between their versions. Tennyson is forced to make several changes to bring out the central incident, and he shows us only the last incident in the story and tells us about the rest in the exposition. He cannot tell the story in plain order as does Longfellow. In dramatizing a story or poem, you must make some similar changes. A few of the many possibilities are:

"The Man Who Was," from Kipling's *The Man Who Was.*
"The Spectre Bridegroom," from Irving's *Sketch Book.*
"The King Comes to Sherwood," from Scott's *Ivanhoe.*

"Ellen Sees the King," from Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* (Canto 6).

"The Escape of Charles Darnay," from Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities.*

3. Take some situation from a story or a poem and consider it from a point of view different from that of the original author. Remember that "The Brink of Silence" is a new treatment of the Enoch Arden situation, which the author of the play had in mind. (See page 254.) A few possibilities:

The Odyssey situation: the unexpected return of a person who has been long absent. (Homer's *Odyssey.*)

The John Gilpin situation: a person who is prevented by circumstances from meeting another person with whom he has an appointment. (Cowper's *The Diverting History of John Gilpin.*)

The John Alden situation: a person who is obliged by friendship to attempt to secure for his friend what he wants for himself. (Longfellow's *The Courtship of Miles Standish.*)

Almost any story or any narrative poem that the class has recently studied will suggest a possibility.

4. Develop a plot around some theme suggested by one of the plays in this volume. For example:

To do right often brings an unexpected reward. "The Dark of the Dawn."

A person often goes to look for a blessing that is waiting for him at home. "The Maker of Dreams."

Cleverness does not always bring success. "A Night at an Inn."

A man who has done the difficult but right thing, will find strength to continue to do right, whatever temptations he may meet. "The Brink of Silence."

Almost every play in this volume will suggest a possibility of treating its theme in a different way. In fact, any one play often suggests several themes, of which the original author may be entirely unconscious.

5. Work out in class some original theme, and let each student incorporate it in a play. Of course, the theme will probably not be "original" in the sense that it has never been used before, but it may be original in that it has no printed source with which you are familiar. The following suggestions may help you to think of other themes:

A trick often recoils and injures the trickster.
A man who thinks he has been self-sacrificing often finds he has the best of the bargain.
A man who has committed a crime in his youth is unable to denounce the same crime in others when he is old.

You can probably continue this list indefinitely. The possibility for themes is limited only by your observation of life.

6. Take some historical character or some historical situation and develop a plot from it. This is what Miss Mackay has done in "The Silver Lining." Notice how cleverly she has led up to the climax, where Fanny's uncle discovers that she is the author of the much-talked-of book. Be sure your play is not mere undramatic dialogue. A few possibilities:

"Dr. Johnson Forgives Mr. Boswell." Let the point be the reconciliation between the two friends after one of their many quarrels. See Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

"The Return of Miles Standish." See Longfellow's *The Courtship of Miles Standish,* and other colonial stories. Perhaps Standish has quarreled with John Alden and has disappeared. A good climax would be his reappearance at the wedding of John and Priscilla. He might be disguised as a peddler or as an Indian!

"Franklin Hears of the Peace." The scene must be in France. Create some situation which shows Franklin in difficulties, and have the difficulty solved by the news that England has given in.

"Addison and Steele." The news of the great success of *The Spectator*, reaching the two authors in their office, may avert a quarrel or bring about some decision.

"Lafayette Convinces General Washington." Lafayette may bring the aid that turns Washington's despair into hope, and they resolve to fight on together until victory is won.

You will be able to think of many other situations in history that would make good plays.

7. Try to write a fanciful play, building up an imaginary or unreal atmosphere. Notice that the success of "The Turtle Dove" depends on its delightful atmosphere. This is a very difficult exercise. Perhaps you can create a Japanese or Abyssinian or Burmese atmosphere. Consult an atlas for queer and pleasing names. Perhaps you can carry your audience into Fairyland, as Shakespeare does in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Perhaps you can create an original atmosphere and mythology of your own, as Dunsany does in *Five Plays* and *Plays of Gods and Men*.

8. Dramatize some real incident that you know about. You may use some occurrence that has happened to yourself or to some member of your family, or you may find some newspaper article that will suggest a situation to you. Of course, you need not stick to the true facts. Tell them as they should have happened in order to make a good play. Remember that you should create some suspense in your exposition by bringing out a problem that you solve at the climax. When you have learned to do this—to take a little incident and make it into a good play by the use of your imagination—you will be a real author!

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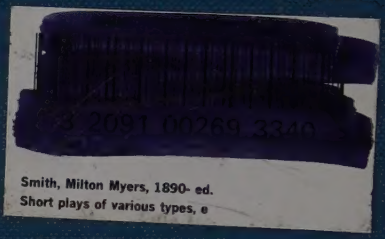
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